NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING: VARIATION IN THE UNITED STATES' MILITARY COOPERATION WITH COLOMBIA AND MEXICO

by

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June 2017

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			*Form Approved OMB No. 0704–0188*

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** June 2017	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
COMBATING DRUG TRAFFICKING: VARIATION IN THE UNITED STATES' MILITARY COOPERATION WITH COLOMBIA AND MEXICO

5. FUNDING NUMBERS

6. AUTHOR(S) Brian S. Curry

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93943-5000

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
N/A

10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The U.S. military cooperates more with the Colombian military than the Mexican military in combating drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. This thesis analyzes the international relations theories of liberalism, realism, and constructivism to help explain why. Historical relationships matter in cooperation. Mexican and U.S. military units waged war to defend and take territory from one another. Mexico passed a constitution banning a garrison of foreign military units within Mexico, leading to low cooperation. The Colombian and U.S. militaries defended the Panama Canal during World War II to keep the shipping lanes open, and Colombia allows a garrison of U.S. military personnel in Colombia, leading to greater cooperation. Realism best explains reasons for when and why these two countries cooperate with the United States. Cooperation exists when there are shared external security concerns by the two countries. Cooperation exists when the internal instability of one country creates a reliance on another country. Cooperation remains low when there is no common external security threat, when one state perceives the other as a threat, or when a country can control internal stability on its own. Further cooperation with Mexico will depend on U.S. military leaders' willingness to empathize with Mexicans about past U.S. military interventions. Further cooperation with Colombia will require continued military-to-military relationships to form, followed by agreements to solidify those relationships.

14. SUBJECT TERMS
Colombia, Mexico, Western Hemisphere, drug trafficking, TOC, military, security, realism, liberalism, constructivism, international relations, border, sovereignty, defense, FARC

15. NUMBER OF PAGES
91

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE**	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT**	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU

NSN 7540–01-280-5500
Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2–89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239–18

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(WESTERN HEMISPHERE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

The U.S. military cooperates more with the Colombian military than the Mexican military in combating drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. This thesis analyzes the international relations theories of liberalism, realism, and constructivism to help explain why. Historical relationships matter in cooperation. Mexican and U.S. military units waged war to defend and take territory from one another. Mexico passed a constitution banning a garrison of foreign military units within Mexico, leading to low cooperation. The Colombian and U.S. militaries defended the Panama Canal during World War II to keep the shipping lanes open, and Colombia allows a garrison of U.S. military personnel in Colombia, leading to greater cooperation. Realism best explains reasons for when and why these two countries cooperate with the United States. Cooperation exists when there are shared external security concerns by the two countries. Cooperation exists when the internal instability of one country creates a reliance on another country. Cooperation remains low when there is no common external security threat, when one state perceives the other as a threat, or when a country can control internal stability on its own. Further cooperation with Mexico will depend on U.S. military leaders' willingness to empathize with Mexicans about past U.S. military interventions. Further cooperation with Colombia will require continued military-to-military relationships to form, followed by agreements to solidify those relationships.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AOR	Area of Responsibility
BBC	Border Commanders Conference
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNP	Colombian National Police
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
ELN	National Liberation Army
EO	Executive Order
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
IR	International Relations
IMET	International Military Education and Training
MCC	Military Cooperation Committee
MTT	Mobile Training Teams
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NORTHCOM	United States Northern Command
PACOM	United States Pacific Command
PCC	Communist Party of Colombia
PEP	Personnel Exchange Program
SAG	Surface Action Group
SEDENA	Mexican Secretariat of National Defense
SEL	Senior Enlisted Leader
SEMAR	Mexican Navy Secretariat
SOA	School of Americas
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime (Criminals)
WHINSC	Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my wife, Christina, and my two boys, Chase and Caleb, for their support and patience during this thesis writing process. I spent countless hours on weekends away from Christina, Chase, and Caleb, but their support and confidence in me to finish this project kept me going. My time at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) has made me stronger and my family anticipated the positive impact this tour would have on my career. For that, I am forever thankful.

I must acknowledge my outstanding advisors, Professor Diego Esparza and Professor Thomas Bruneau. Professor Esparza kept me on track and guided me throughout the entire thesis process. His insight into my topic and his constant encouragement to do better paved the way for my success. Professor Bruneau played a pivotal role in fine-tuning my final product. This thesis project would not have been completed without these two professors.

I thank Katherine Egerton of the NPS Graduate Writing Center, Sue Hawthorne of the NPS Thesis Processing Office, all of my NPS professors, my parents, my family, and my current and former shipmates who have served with me at previous commands.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 10, 2016, Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, Commander, United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), provided a statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee. Admiral Tidd stated, "we work with our partners to defend the southern approaches to the United States, respond to regional contingencies, and promote security cooperation with the 31 nations and 16 areas of special sovereignty in our Area of Responsibility (AOR)."[1] Admiral William E. Gortney, Commander, United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM), told the Senate Armed Services committee "we are inextricably linked with our partners through geography, economics, and demographics, and conduct deliberate security cooperation with them to strengthen our defense in depth and advance our mutual security interests."[2] To combat drug trafficking, cooperation between countries is vital. However, what explains why two countries cooperate with each other? According to Admiral Tidd, Colombia, located in the SOUTHCOM AOR, is "a strategic ally, friend, and preeminent partner" that has experienced years of bilateral cooperation with the United States.[3] Mexico, located in the NORTHCOM AOR, is a border country and has only more recently started cooperating bilaterally with the United States. What explains the variation in both timing and substance between U.S. military and Colombian military cooperation, and U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation to combat drug trafficking?

This research project will investigate the topic utilizing scholarly articles debating different international relations theories that lead to cooperation. Additionally, it will analyze the historical military relationships, economic ties, and political institutions that join these countries together to combat drug trafficking. This thesis is not about whether

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[1] United States Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt Tidd, Commander, United States Southern Command, United States Senate,* 114th Congress (Washington, DC: GPO, 2016).

[2] United States Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Posture Statement of Admiral William E. Gortney, Commander, United States Northern Command, United States Senate,* 114th Congress (Washington, DC: GPO, 2016).

[3] United States Senate, *Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt Tidd.*

NORTHCOM or SOUTHCOM is doing a better job in cooperating with each country. Instead, this thesis will outline the reasons why countries cooperate and apply this analytical framework to understand the variation in cooperation to combat drug traffickers in the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Colombia cases.

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) and the drug trade emanating from Latin America impact the U.S. security posture along the southern border and international security stability throughout Central and South America. All three countries in this case study can likely agree that external security threats to national sovereignty, economic interests that benefits each country, and internal instability would require cooperation from one another.

Strong, cooperative international relationships are essential to combat drug trafficking. This research is significant to at least two groups: Foreign policy decision-makers and the U.S. military, since, more than ever, our military answers the call to interact and build partner capacity with other nations. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the Colombian military reached out to the United States and offered designated locations within the country to house seaplanes to attack Axis powers.[4] Specific events like this have led Bradley Coleman to argue, "World War II and the Cold War transformed U.S.-Colombian security relations."[5] The United States and Colombian militaries still maintain a strong working relationship today. U.S. military personnel frequently use Colombian military bases and train Colombian counterparts in Colombia. Mexico and the United States fought against one another in the Mexican-American War, likely generating bad historical relationships between the two. Although Mexico did support the Allies during WWII, and assisted the United States with creating factories in country to support the war effort, the Mexican Constitution prevents a garrison of foreign military units.

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[4] Cesar A. Vasquez, "A History of the United States Caribbean Defense Command (1941-1947)" (Dissertation, Florida International University, 2016), 4, http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/2458/?utm_source=digitalcommons.fiu.edu%2Fetd%2F2458&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages.

[5] Bradley Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939–1960* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008), xiii.

The U.S. military will find the comparative case study approach underpinning this thesis important because Colombia is in the SOUTHCOM AOR and Mexico is in the NORTHCOM AOR. SOUTHCOM's self-proclaimed mission is to "support U.S. national security objectives and interagency efforts that promote regional security cooperation" and carry out operations to stop drug trafficking.[6] NORTHCOM has a mission to "defend, protect, and secure the United States and its interests."[7] U.S. military personnel frequently conduct exercises with countries like Colombia and Mexico. Admiral Tidd, Commander of SOUTHCOM, reported that Operation MARTILLO has been a successful operation since January 15, 2012. Operation MARTILLO is a multinational operation involving Colombia, the United States, and 12 other countries, stopping transnational organizations from smuggling illicit cargo through Central America. To date, Operation MARTILLO has led to the "disruption of 595 metric tons of cocaine, the seizure of $25.8 million in bulk cash, and the seizure of 1486 detainees and 478 vessels and aircraft."[8] Admiral Gortney reported that relations between the U.S. and Mexican militaries improved dramatically in 2015 and stated, "in 2015 alone, I personally met with top military leaders of Mexico on eight separate occasions to strengthen our relationships and enhance our coordination."[9] With the constant exercises occurring in the region between Colombian and U.S. militaries, and the continued dialogue taking place between the Mexican and U.S. government officials, military personnel need to understand the importance of U.S.-Colombian cooperation and U.S.-Mexican cooperation.

Foreign policy decision-makers will find this research important because they appropriate the money and establish institutions that lead to cooperation. In 2000, the U.S. government enacted a diplomatic initiative with Colombia, called Plan Colombia, which would provide military assistance and aid to the Colombian military to combat drug cartels. The appropriated funds totaled approximately $10 billion. In 2008, Congress

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[6] United States Southern Command, Department of Defense, last modified October 7, 2010, http://www.southcom.mil/Pages/Default.aspx.

[7] United States Northern Command, Department of Defense, last modified December 21, 2015, http://www.northcom.mil/.

[8] United States Senate, *Posture Statement of Admiral Kurt Tidd*.

[9] United States Senate, *Posture Statement of Admiral William E. Gortney*.

approved a bilateral security cooperation agreement with Mexico, called the Mérida Initiative. Since the agreement signing, Congress appropriated almost $2.8 billion to help Mexico stop TOC, create rule of law, secure the shared border, and build strong community foundations.[10] In FY2017, the U.S. government plans to provide Mexico with $134 million and Colombia with $391 million in foreign assistance aid.[11] Better understanding of the U.S. government's role in financial support and institution building in Latin America could lead to increases or decreases in financial assistance or treaties based on mission success or failure in cooperation efforts. This research could generate future foreign policy decisions in other parts of the globe, based again on those mission successes or failures.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis draws on three international relations (IR) theories that attempt to define cooperation between two states within the international system. These three theories are realism, liberalism, and constructivism. While scholars of all three schools present different theories and arguments for the ease and likelihood of cooperation, they all agree that cooperation can exist and is fundamental in international relations.[12]

This literature review starts with the proponents of realism as it relates to cooperation and looks at why states maximize their security by cooperating with other states in an anarchic system. Then, this review will look at the liberal view of cooperation by examining what it means to lead meaningful cooperation to promote positive change. Finally, this review will touch on the constructivist argument, where states can cooperate with each other but they may disagree, depending on the social relationship, which could cause conflict between those states.

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[10] Clare R. Seelke and Kristin Finklea, "U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond," *Congressional Research Service*, August 16, 2010, 1. http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a528272.pdf.

[11] Foreign Assistance, Department of State, last modified June 9, 2016, http://beta.foreignassistance.gov/.

[12] David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York, NY: Colombia University Press, 1993), 5.

1. Cooperation and Realism

Proponents of realism argue that anarchy drives the international system and states are primary contributors and receivers of that force. Anarchy creates competition between states and "inhibits their willingness to cooperate even when they share common interests."[13] Two leading debates under realism today try to explain cooperation between states. Hans Morgenthau, Thomas Hobbes, and Reinhold Niebuhr argue that human nature dictates how states regard cooperation and that states constantly struggle for power. Morgenthau created six principles of political realism to support his argument. To summarize those six principles, all states want to achieve the best outcome for themselves, but there are limits on those actions by reasonable thinking, universal law, and interests defined by power. Attaining cooperation occurs when these actions align with what each country is trying to achieve. It is reasonable to think that the drug trade is bad for any country, human rights abuses by drug traffickers go against universal law, and an interest in stopping the drug trade is a common goal.

Kenneth Waltz argues that states in an anarchic structure compete with each other to survive and cooperation is difficult under anarchy. Waltz further explains that cooperation can be a dangerous choice for some because states seek to maximize relative gains and to avoid dependency.

Charles Glaser argues, "structural realism properly understood predicts that, under a wide range of conditions, adversaries can best achieve their security goals through cooperative policies, not competitive ones, and should, therefore choose cooperation when these conditions prevail."[14] Countering liberal arguments that argue structural realism promotes competition, Glaser attempts to support his argument by analyzing a state's military-policy when at peace and comparing it to an arms race.[15] Glaser suggests

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[13] Shameem Ahmad Mir, "Realism, Anarchy and Cooperation," *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 8 (2014): 165, http://imsear.li.mahidol.ac.th/bitstream/123456789/176169/1/ijims2014v1n8p164.pdf.

[14] Charles Glaser, "Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-Help," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1995): 51, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539079.

[15] Ibid., 51.

cooperation, in a structural realism setting, refers to a set of policies, or institutions, created by two states to prevent an arms race between the two countries, while competition would see military buildup unilaterally.[16] Creating institutions to achieve cooperation could occur within Glaser's reasoning.

2. Cooperation and Liberalism

Two leading debates under liberalism today try to explain why cooperation occurs between states. Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane argue, "achieving cooperation is difficult in world politics. There is no common government to enforce rules, and by the standards of domestic society, international institutions are weak."[17] States will need to work together, settle differences, and cooperate for the common good of the two states. Even though the international system may be anarchic in structure, proponents of neo-liberalism believe cooperation is difficult, but not impossible. Axelrod and Keohane further argue, "cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others."[18] Accordingly, institutions are crucial for enhancing the possibility of cooperation through coordination.

Helen Milner sides with Keohane's definition of cooperation as "actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination."[19] Accordingly, Milner argues, "policy coordination, in turn, implies that the policies of the two states have been adjusted to reduce their negative consequences for the other states."[20] These arguments assume that states behave because they want to achieve an expected goal and desire some type of reward for coordinating policy change to cooperation.[21] For example, the United States would cooperate with

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[16] Glaser, "Realists as Optimists," 51.

[17] Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions," *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985): 226, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2010357.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Helen Milner, "International Theories of Cooperation among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses," *World Politics* 44, no. 3 (1992): 467, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010546.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 468.

Mexico because the desired goal for the United States is stopping illegal drugs from entering the United States southern border. Mexico would likely cooperate because Mexico's goals could be achieving more training from the United States and more economic assistance in the form of foreign aid.

Bruce Russett argues that democratic states like the United States will not attack or act violently toward similar governments and will likely achieve cooperation because of state norms and goals. Since democratic states share similar norms and goals, states could achieve a peaceful resolution to existing problems through cooperation. Russett further argues that democratic states, tied together by a common set of institutions, will cross national boundaries.[22] Transnational linkages and institutions, like individuals, private entities, and government organizations, create "individual autonomy and pluralism."[23] The United States, Mexico, and Colombia share common internal institutions as democratic governments as well as treaties established between the countries, like Plan Colombia and the Mérida Initiative. This argument should prove that common norms could facilitate cooperation between these states to some extent.

3. Cooperation and Constructivism

Alexander Wendt argues that states can cooperate with each other but can also disagree, depending on the social relationship between said states. Wendt defines constructivist social theory thus: "people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them."[24] The United States and Colombia will interact differently toward each other, compared to the United States and North Korea, and likely cooperate because they perceive each other as friends. The United States and North Korea perceive each other as enemies and will likely have limited cooperation.

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[22] Bruce Russett, "The Fact of Democratic Peace," In *Debating the Democratic Peace*, ed. Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1996), 85.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organizations* 46, no. 2 (1992): 396–397, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858.

Proponents of constructivism argue to move past rationalism and suggest that state preferences and identities are not set in stone nor formed from external factors. Instead, these preferences and identities form internally due to external interaction and can adapt to change over a given timeframe through social interaction. For instance, while the United States and Mexico may have had limited cooperation in the past due to historical relationships, the two countries have shown drastic changes in preferences and identities in cooperation over the last few years as their goals align.

Ganjar Nugroho argues, "it is a complex world where many factors are interrelated and affect each other. Material structure, international social structures, and domestic politics, all together construct the world's politics and economy, and construct relations among states."[25] Nugroho points out that state-to-state identity building and developing a social relationship to understand a state are keys to cooperation. States may cheat in the international system, but if a state seeking cooperation can predict a partner state may cheat, the state wanting to cheat may reconsider to keep its good reputation in the international arena.[26] For example, if the United States and Mexico signed a treaty to provide foreign aid to Mexico to combat the drug trade, and Mexico failed to live up to its end of the deal, the international community may not work with Mexico in the future against drug trafficking because Mexico had not acted on good faith in past cooperation efforts.

B. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis looks at two independent variables, security and internal instability, to help determine what causes the change in the dependent variable, cooperation. The three possible explanations that best explain cooperation in international relations are realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Each theory is testable by looking at the reasons why cooperation has existed since the early 1900s between the U.S. and Colombian militaries, and the late 1800s between the U.S. and Mexican militaries.

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[25] Ganjar Nugroho, "Constructivism and International Relations Theories," *Global and Strategies* 2, no. 1 (2008): 95, http://journal.unair.ac.id/filerPDF/6%20constructivism-final%20edit%20OK.pdf.

[26] Ibid., 93.

1. Realist Hypothesis

Realists would argue that a state would cooperate with a hegemonic state if it feels its choice to cooperate would lead to its own national security and is content with the status quo of the hegemonic states' powerful influence in the region. The United States benefits when it cooperates with other countries in Latin America and assists those countries to become independent enough to handle their own internal security issues. That cooperation is achievable depending on the security situation and power struggle in the region viewed by each country. External threats to the two countries have led to cooperation in the past, like the common defense of the Panama Canal during World War II. The United States has never invaded Colombia or infringed on Colombian sovereignty, but formally recognized Panama becoming an independent state from the break-up of Gran Colombia in 1903. The United States is a hegemon in the Western Hemisphere and likely pressures other countries, like Colombia, into cooperation. The United States routinely advises the Colombian military on combating drug trafficking and internal security issues. Colombia, in public, trusts the intentions of the United States when the U.S. military operates in Colombia. The United States has taken land from Mexico in the past. Mexico could be warming up to the idea that cooperation with U.S. military assets may be in its best interests today because they share a common enemy in combating drug traffickers. Historically, Mexico has been hesitant because of its own security and sovereignty concerns that the United States may have a larger agenda for Mexico than just partnering to combat drug trafficking. This has led to lower cooperation between Mexico and the United States.

H_1: A Realist hypothesis correlates with the security of a state from external threats. States will cooperate with each other when they share their external security concerns.

2. Liberal Hypothesis

Proponents of liberalism would argue that a state would cooperate with another state when stronger formal or informal institutions are established. The liberal hypothesis falls under the international relations theory of liberalism. Plan Colombia (United States

and Colombia) and The Mérida Initiative (United States and Mexico) are two treaties signed by these respective governments with a common goal: to combat drug trafficking. However, those documents present very different ways to achieve that goal and could be further researched to show the differences in the institutions it creates. Corruption from within Mexico and the FARC contributing to internal instability within Colombia leads to weak formal institutions. This could also create a situation where strong informal institutions arise. Governments need initiatives to root out corruption at all levels of government to ensure criminal organizations are not influencing military and police units. Treaties and rules have no teeth if corrupt leaders do not follow or abide by them. Formal and informal institutions exist in the two countries. If certain governmental institutions are unwilling or inadequate to cooperate with the international community, informal institutions will need to be set up to continue combating drug traffickers and established organizations like the FARC.

H_2: The liberal hypothesis correlates with internal instability. States will cooperate with each other when internal instability extends beyond a state's capacity to handle such activities using established formal and informal institutions. Internal instability could arise from economic, political, or security concerns.

3. Constructivist Hypothesis

Constructivists would argue that a state would cooperate with another state when good social relationships, both historical and current, are established. This hypothesis falls in line with the international relations theory of constructivism. The United States and Colombia have shared a military past for many years and "embodied the Inter-American cooperation."[27] The United States and Mexico were involved in an armed conflict during the 1840s. War of this kind may contribute to a hesitation in cooperation with some military branches over time. Current military relationships show some signs of cooperation, but Colombia allows the U.S. military to station advisors in its country,

[27] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 42.

whereas Mexico does not, except for defense attaches. In addition, Colombia participates in more international military exercises with the United States than does Mexico.

H_3: Constructivism correlates with shared social relationships, how the world shaped human action, and their identities on the world stage. Cooperation exists when human identities and interests align with one another.

C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design uses the structured, focused comparison method. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett argue that, "the method is structured in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases possible."[28] Research on U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation and U.S. military and Colombian military cooperation will occur with regard to historical relationships, international training and aid, and institutions so that the structure and focus applies equally to each case study.[29]

The United States, Colombia, and Mexico are good case studies, referred to by Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune in their book *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* as, "the most similar systems design."[30] Przeworski and Teune suggest that this type of study is "based on the belief that systems as similar as possible with respect to as many features as possible constitute the optimal samples for comparative inquiry."[31] The three countries selected all share common security, economic, and political characteristics. Przeworski and Teune then predict, "if some important differences are found among these otherwise similar countries, then the number of factors attributable to

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[28] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004), 67.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York, NY: Krieger Publishing Company, 1982), 32.

[31] Ibid.

these differences will be sufficiently small to warrant explanation in terms of those differences alone."[32]

This research aims to establish the importance of various independent variables, like the U.S. military relationship with the Colombian military or the frequency of international training the two countries receive to combat the drug trade, in formulating outcomes.[33] The variables I will research and analyze are the historical relationships between the military branches; the international training, aid, and support countries receive; and the formal and informal institutions established in each country. Examining the social and historical relationships between the military branches will occur by looking at U.S. military leaders and their relationships with their counterparts. Researching formal and informal institutions established in Colombia and Mexico will occur to see if treaties, rules, governments, foreign aid, and other programs contribute to successful cooperation as well as international training the Colombians and Mexicans receive from foreign military or law enforcement units. Finally, assessing competition between the countries, if any, will occur to see if Colombia and Mexico compete with each other to receive United States assistance, or if competition between the two states and the United States occur in the form of economic or military power that could hinder cooperation.

D. METHODOLOGY

The thesis will draw on research from historical military relationships and cooperation efforts between the U.S. and Colombian militaries since the early 1900s because the two militaries did not cooperate with each other prior to this point in time. Additionally, research will include the Mexican military and U.S. military relationship, and cooperation efforts since the late 1800s, reviewing why the two militaries did not cooperate until WWII. These timeframes are important because the two countries experienced different reasons for cooperation and set up different formal and informal institutions to structure those cooperation efforts. Nevertheless, they look similar on

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[32] Przeworski and Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, 32.

[33] George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory*, 80.

paper as just two Latin American countries influenced by United States' policies with common external security interests.

For the international relations theory portion of this thesis, I will lean heavily on leading scholars in the fields of constructivism, liberalism, and realism as they relate to international cooperation. For historical and recent cooperation efforts between the countries, I will use secondary scholarly sources from authors considered experts in their field of study, producing books on military cooperation efforts between the United States and Latin American countries, and articles relevant to cooperation in the Western Hemisphere. Finally, I will use primary sources from archived newspapers to strengthen the academic sources.

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II. EVALUATING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICAN MILITARIES

A. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. and Mexican militaries did not cooperate from the 1800s to World War II because each of the two countries viewed its sovereign territory differently, resulting in conflict. With the United States expanding west and increasing its military might by the day, fighting between the two militaries occurred over territorial disputes and perceived border violations. U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation began to form during World War II when Axis powers attacked civilian shipping vessels from both countries, driving a common interest at the government level to form cooperation efforts between their militaries. U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation in the battlefield on foreign territory, like World War II combat operations with Mexican air forces in the Philippines, started this military relationship.

After World War II and through the United States' war on drugs policy, the two countries cooperated in training evolutions aimed at strengthening the tactics, techniques, and procedures that the Mexican Army and Navy would need to combat the growing threat of guerilla warfare and internal security unrest from drug cultivation and trade. When Mexican military units engaged in counter-drug operations, U.S. military units were in a standoff status, advising and assisting as needed, or training Mexican forces prior to their executed operations.

After 9/11, cooperation continued to rise, with Mexican Navy and U.S. Navy units participating in international maritime exercises and Mexican Army units training with U.S. Special Operation forces in the United States to better combat drug cartels and TOCs, and to reduce internal security issues alongside their civilian law enforcement counterparts. Most cooperation efforts between the two militaries occur in an academic classroom or at training facilities in the United States. An increase over the years in the number of Mexican military students attending service-level institutions, such as uniformed service graduate schools in the United States, is also encouraging because it

builds individual relationships with U.S. counterparts that could foster cooperation efforts in the future.

Within the last five years, there have been more joint security exercises and training evolutions among Mexico, Canada, and the United States on land, sea, and air than at any time in history. Mexican military officials are taking more of a lead role in some of these exercises, and their cooperation with the U.S. military continues to heal the metaphorical mental scars from remembered historical grievances.

This chapter analyzes major events that took place from the 1800s to present day between the Mexican and U.S. militaries. It further answers the question: what explains the variation in both timing and substance in cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico? I argue, in tune with realist perspectives, that cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican militaries occur when the two countries look out for their own external security interests, but cooperate when mutually beneficial. This distinction matters because realism also explains why the two countries fought each other in the 1800s. Mexico, a smaller state in the region, is content with the United States, a hegemonic power, looking out for its own national security interests in drug trafficking. However, Mexico's focus on mutually beneficial cooperation changes when the United States violates its sovereignty. Historically, cooperation between the two countries has been low because they were a threat to each other under anarchy. Recent mutual benefits in security and economic interests have been the driving force to increase cooperation. The two countries need to move forward from historical differences and cooperate to challenge domestic and international security threats at the military level. While liberalism could explain recent gains in cooperation because of the formal institutions set in place, or constructivism because recent social relationships have fostered cooperation, realism still best explains individual states living in an anarchic world. Cooperation between the two countries will occur when the two countries face a security threat from drug trafficking or other external factor. However, Mexico will still be hesitant in its current and future relationship with the U.S. military, given their historical conflict.

B. PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

The United States and Mexico experienced conflict after conflict during the 1800s and early 1900s. The United States was more interested in expansion west and land grabs as opposed to bilateral cooperation with Mexico. In the late 1800s, the U.S. government turned to its military forces, both Navy and Army, to fend off Mexican military units and Mexican citizens harassing U.S. citizens. Due to the historical battles with the United States, Mexican military officers attending Mexican institutions as part of their formal training learn "a professional culture that embodies myths and legends of Mexican military heroes defending against invasions from the north."[34] Mexicans learn that the U.S. military will encroach on their sovereign territory and should not be trusted.

From 1836 to 1917, the U.S. military and the Mexican military engaged each other on the battlefield resulting in death, destruction, and occupation, and historical records indicate that the U.S. military intervened in Mexico on eleven separate occasions.[35] The United States declared war on Mexico in 1846 because former President James Polk felt Mexico had invaded U.S. territory, territory Mexico still claimed as its own. In 1847, at the Battle of Buena Vista, U.S. military forces clashed with Mexican General Santa Anna and his army. The battle occurred in large part because Mexico had lost the territory of Texas and was soon to lose larger chunks of land in New Mexico and California. The United States sent military forces, led by U.S. Army General Winfield Scott, to Mexico City, where they remained for approximately 18 months. In 1848, the two countries signed a treaty to end hostile activities and the U.S. military returned home. Mexico lost over half of its land to the north, approximately 525,000 square miles.[36] Mexicans still remember this event in Mexican military history, which likely supports

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[34] Richard D. Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico: The Future of U.S./Mexican Defense Relations," *Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 10, http://chds.DODlive.mil/files/2013/12/pub-OP-downie1.pdf.

[35] S. Brian Wilson, "The Slippery Slope: U.S. Military Moves into Mexico," *Mexico/Zapatistas* (blog), April 8, 1998, http://www.brianwillson.com/the-slippery-slope-u-s-military-moves-into-mexico/.

[36] Graham H. Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future" *Joint Special Operations University Report 10–2* (Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2010), 4, http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA516048.

skepticism within the Mexican Army about any U.S. military objectives toward Mexico.[37]

Battles between the two countries also occurred along the coastline, with the U.S. Navy engaging enemy positions. In 1914, the U.S. Navy sailed to Veracruz, Mexico, and anchored in the harbor until the end of the year in response to the Tampico Affair, a small incident resulting in the arrest of nine U.S. sailors by Mexican authorities in Tampico, Mexico.

The United States perceived the incursions across the border as justified. In 1916, Army General Pershing crossed the U.S./Mexico border into Northern Mexico with 10,000+ troops. General Pershing was chasing Pancho Villa for disturbing U.S. citizens in the New Mexico territory. Turbiville argues that Pershing's "expedition deep into Mexico's Chihuahua State in retaliation for Pancho Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico was an especially notable consequence of the Mexican Revolution."[38] These punitive actions lasted until 1917. In 1919, the incursions across the border continued when the U.S. Army attacked the Mexican sovereign territory of Juarez, Mexico. The Mexican Army was in the middle of fighting with Pancho Villa supporters within the city. U.S. military forces crossed the border and, through "haphazard and unsanctioned cooperation with Mexican federal troops," waged war with the Mexican rebels.[39]

In 1917, Mexico adopted a new constitution that would identify restrictions on its own military and its relationship with foreign militaries. This constitution laid out a few stringent military requirements. First, the Mexican military cannot sign an alliance with anyone, although, during World War II, there was an exception made to this provision. Second, Mexican military units are not allowed to participate in peacekeeping efforts abroad. Third, the Mexican military would need senate approval to conduct military operations with foreign militaries. Finally, foreign military troops cannot garrison in Mexican territory unless congress approves. Laws exist that also prevent U.S. military

[37] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 4–5.

[38] Ibid., 5.

[39] Ibid.

units from freely entering Mexico. The Mérida Initiative is one such law that does not specify U.S. military personnel shall reside in Mexico and it is likely that Mexico made this point when drafting this initiative because of past concerns with national sovereignty.

Prior to World War II, Mexico and the United States failed to cooperate because the two countries were trying to survive in an anarchic world with their own states being the priority. Proponents of realism can likely explain why the two countries protected their sovereignty and rights as a nation. They were looking out for their own security interests during this time and had no reason to cooperate. In effect, each was insecure about its respective neighboring state. Mexico was trying to hold onto its territories to the north and the United States wanted to expand and bring in those territories. The Mexican and U.S. governments used their militaries to push civilian objectives and pursue their own national interests. This ultimately led to war on the battlefield between the two militaries, with some occurring deep into Mexico. The power struggle that defined the border between the two countries continued until World War II.

World War II would provide the two countries with opportunities to cooperate. At first, Mexico tried to remain neutral and benefit economically from both the Allies and Axis powers by selling oil to anyone willing to buy it. Mexico extended an olive branch to the United States when it realized its neighbor to the north needed its assistance in the war. Mexico offered its military bases to house U.S. troops and the Mexican Airforce flew combat sorties against the Japanese in the Philippines. Mexico was a country that likely wanted world recognition as a team player in international relations. It helped the allies win the war by cooperating with the United States to defeat a common world threat, the axis powers. While national sovereignty was not in immediate danger from Japan or Germany, economic threats were likely forming.

C. WORLD WAR II TO THE WAR ON DRUGS

During World War II, warmer relations between the United States and Mexico signaled a possible open door to military cooperation between the two countries. Just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, United States President Franklin Roosevelt took action to strengthen U.S. borders and coastlines. However, his vision of a secure border

to the south extended well past U.S. sovereign territory and extended into the Panama Canal region.[40] Roosevelt also knew he needed allies in the Western Hemisphere to fight the European Axis of power in the Atlantic. Roosevelt sought out countries that could provide economic resources like oil, sugar, and other food commodities, and forward bases and forces to help in the fight.

Mexico provided both of these to its neighbors to the north. Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas allowed the U.S. military to use Mexico's military bases to house troops should the need arise.[41] U.S. military officials knew that the presence of U.S. forces in Mexico would be a touchy subject for their Mexican counterparts. Therefore, wording in documents and other transactions had to make sure that "occupation" was not included in the verbiage. Instead of possibly housing U.S. military forces in Mexican territory, the U.S. government proposed the idea to "provide the means for Mexico to insure her ability to defend herself against any probable attack from overseas and against internal disorder, until U.S.-armed aid can arrive in sufficient force to insure success."[42] However, German documents found toward the end of the war suggested the Cardenas administration "passively supported Germany both by allowing the export of strategic raw materials and by turning a blind eye to the activities of German intelligence agents based in Mexico."[43] U.S. officials knew that Germany was conducting a propaganda campaign in Mexico to thwart Mexico-U.S. cooperation.[44] German agents were spreading rumors that the United States, after being granted access to port facilities and airbases within Mexico, would turn its sights on Mexico City and occupy the capital, too.[45] This likely affected some

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[40] Maria Emilia Paz, *Strategy, Security, and Spies: Mexico and the U.S. as Allies in World War II* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 9.

[41] Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum*, no. 243 (2009): 2, http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA504170.

[42] Paz, *Strategy, Security, and Spies*, 48.

[43] Ibid., 34.

[44] "Mexico's Distrust is stirred by Axis: Agents Spread Rumor of U.S. Plot to Occupy the Capital after bases are taken," *New York Times*, January 31, 1942, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[45] Ibid.

Mexican people who were alive when the United States continuously entered their sovereign country in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Mexico catered to Japanese officials, too. Japan needed oil and it requested the resource from Mexico. At the civilian level, U.S. officials made sure Mexico did not sell its oil stocks to Japan. However, shortly after the United States intervened in the Mexico oil export market, the Mexican Defense Secretary, General Agustin Castro, attempted to procure almost three million gallons of aviation fuel for his Air Forces. The U.S. Naval Attaché in Mexico reported, "the Mexican Air Force could not use more than 216,000 gallons a year, therefore indicating that the greater part of the order was intended for re-export to Japan."[46] Both of these incidents highlight the fact that Mexico simultaneously attempted to create a better situation for itself with Japan and Germany behind closed doors, and with the United States in public. Thankfully, these two incidents did not thwart cooperation in the Philippines between the United States and Mexico. Mexico found itself drawn into the war and in support of the United States when German U-boats successfully attacked Mexican civilian shipping lines of trade in the Atlantic Ocean.[47]

In 1942, the United States created the Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission through Executive Order (EO) 9080. Graham H. Turbiville, Jr. argued that this commission "was integral in coordinating joint wartime defense activities, including Lend Lease and training, and constitutes one of the earliest joint cooperative forums with strong military content" between the United States and Mexico.[48] Military interaction and coordination between the United States and Mexico occurred at all officer levels, and Mexican military officials emulated U.S. military training and tactics at their own bases.[49]

Mexican military forces cooperated with U.S. forces in the Pacific Theater by sending its 201st Fighter Squadron from the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force to fight the

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[46] Paz, *Strategy, Security, and Spies*, 45.

[47] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 6.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 7.

Japanese.[50] These P-47 fighter pilots attended flight school in the United States and trained under U.S. Army Air Corps aviators. These newly minted fighter pilots flew alongside U.S. Air Corps forces in support of "offensive combat sorties in ground attack, fighter sweep, dive bombing, and other roles."[51] These events showed that Mexican military units could fight overseas and "contributed greatly to Mexican military modernization and training, improved mutual perceptions among military personnel of the two nations, and created precedent for future forms of military-to-military cooperation."[52] In the Western Hemisphere, Mexican gunboats and airplanes patrolled the western coast of Mexico "in collaboration with the United States Navy" to protect its shoreline from an internal axis threat that could move from the interior of Mexico and cause security concerns along the coast.[53]

From World War II to the war on drugs, realism, again, explains why cooperation between the U.S. military and Mexican military began to form slowly. When the United States entered World War II, it triggered a manufacturing frenzy that transformed the United States into a strong world power. Mexico remained reserved, afraid the United States would trample over its sovereign rights. However, Mexico did understand that a common enemy in the world could bring the two countries to cooperate. The Axis powers provided that common enemy. Mexico also knew that its national security could be at risk. The United States was the hegemon in the region. Mexico likely felt cooperation would improve its national security interests and were content with the status quo.

After the war on drugs declaration in 1972, the U.S. military found itself concentrating more on the threat of communism globally and less on Latin America despite the drug flow from drug trafficking within the Southern Hemisphere. A few important military relationships did develop from key military leaders, in the two countries, like U.S. General Gordon Sullivan and Mexican General Enrique Cervantes.

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[50] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 3.

[51] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 6.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "Mexican Gunboats, Planes now Patrol: Cooperate with U.S. in Hemisphere Defense-Aircraft Asked," *New York Times*, January 7, 1942, https://www.nytimes.com/.

These relationships developed because the countries shared a common external security threat from drug traffickers moving through Mexico and into the United States. Individuals helped foster cooperation efforts between the two militaries, providing training and education in the United States. If the United States had attempted to provide this training in Mexico, cooperation would have been lower because of Mexico's strict adherence to sovereignty.

D. WAR ON DRUGS TO 9/11

The U.S. military continued to engage the Cold War threat looming around the world.[54] Latin America received little attention unless pressure from the Soviet Union affected the region with the spread of communism. U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation garnered little attention other than training curriculums in an educational environment, mostly with Mexican military personnel attending U.S. military-led training. Mexico had its fair share of domestic security issues and rarely, if ever, looked to the United States to provide international support against its enemies. Mexico was content with military cooperation in training to combat the rising drug trade problems in its country and to modernize its army and navy, as appropriate, whereas the United States wanted to focus the training on border and regional security in the hemisphere. Mexican presidents Carlos Salinas de Goratari De La Madrid, Jose Lopez Protillo, and Luis Echeverria brought a more conservative ideology to international relations, which were friendlier to the United States.

In 1972, President Nixon declared a war on drugs because a dramatic importation of drugs from the southern border. Nixon's declaration made it clear that the war on drugs would reach well in to Latin America and operations by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the U.S. military would become frequent in Latin America. To fill the need for cooperation in regions where the U.S. military could not go, Congress passed the Arms Export Control Act of 1976. This paid for, regulated, and allowed Mexican military officers to attend senior-level military schools and other military training institutions in

[54] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 11–12.

the United States. International Military Education and Training (IMET) was the official name of this program. Mexican military officers who attended this cooperative learning curriculum took their tactics and procedures back to Mexico and applied what they learned to the domestic security threat and drug trafficking from TOCs.[55]

Mexican distaste for U.S. military intervention within its sovereign borders has always been a touchy subject. In 1980, Mexico created the National Museum of Interventions. This museum occupied the previous building used by Mexican military forces to fight back U.S. military troops moving into Mexico City in 1846. The museum highlights military engagements by the two countries during the Mexican-American War as well as the Texas Revolution and other cross-border skirmishes previously mentioned.[56]

In 1986, the Mexican government rightly determined that drug cartels, human trafficking, and other guerrilla forces were causing security issues within its borders. Mexico reached out to the United States for assistance. The two countries agreed on "a military initiative that was to have future implications for Mexican force structure and U.S.-Mexican military interaction, together with it resulted in the 1986 creation of a Rapid Response Force, which by 1990 had become the first Airmobile Special Forces Group."[57] U.S. forces trained their Mexican military counterparts to work in small tactical groups to disrupt criminal organizations.

In 1989, the United States created a U.S. Army drug task force along the Mexico/U.S. border to stop drug flows over the porous border. The location of this new task force was in El Paso, Texas. Mexico alerted the U.S. government to this mobilization and expressed "what it sees as growing militarization of the border."[58] This buildup of military units likely caused Mexico to remember the pains of its historical past of the

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[55] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 11.

[56] Ibid., 8.

[57] Ibid., 15.

[58] Larry Rohter, "Sovereignty Hinders U.S.-Mexican Drug Alliance," *New York Times*, February 25, 1990, https://www.nytimes.com/.

U.S. military invasion of Mexico.[59] However, U.S. military officials pointed out that "our charter is restricted to anti-narcotics, and we are precluded from any law enforcement action, such as search, seizure, and arrest. We can provide the eyes and ears, but we can't do anything as regards interdiction."[60]

The United States has a Defense Attaché in Mexico City. In 1992, Army General Joseph Stringham was the last U.S. Defense Attaché Flag Officer posted there and his personality as well as the willingness of the two countries defense agencies, strengthened close ties between the two.[61] Since then, Field Grade Officers have assumed the Defense Attaché position. However, Turbiville argues that from 1992 to 1995, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan should be credited with creating the strongest ties of military cooperation between the two countries, and rightly so, because Mexican military leadership held him in high regard.[62] General Sullivan would meet with Mexican Secretary of National Defense, General Antonio Riviello, to discuss various ways the two military units could strengthen their relationship.[63] Cooperation between the two armies included "initiatives constituting liaison visit and staff talks, airborne training, and additional security assistance along with continued IMET and in-country training."[64] Meetings between the two generals and their lower level staffs concentrated on concerted efforts in cooperation to tackle counter drug operations.[65] General Sullivan likely viewed military cooperation with Mexico as a vital security relationship. General Sullivan proposed guidance to help the two countries "share U.S. experiences regarding how media can best be informed of military activities that benefit society, develop a better understanding of Mexican military history," and translate the Army Field Manual from

[59] Rohter, "Sovereignty Hinders U.S.-Mexican Drug Alliance."

[60] Ibid.

[61] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 3.

[62] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 18–20.

[63] Ibid., 18.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

English to Spanish.[66] General Sullivan continued his guidance by enabling military leaders to reach out to their cross-border counterparts, to develop meaningful relationships, and to create "Mobile Training Teams (MTT) and Personnel Exchange Programs (PEP)" to enhance cooperation efforts."[67]

In 1994, the Mexican Secretary of Defense, General Enrique Cervantes, visited the Pentagon. William J. Perry led the Department of Defense. In 1995, Secretary Perry visited Mexico, a first for any U.S. Defense Secretary. General Cervantes played host to Secretary Perry. Secretary Perry met with other Mexican military leaders like Mexican Navy Secretary Admiral Lorenzo Franco. This meeting in Mexico led to a U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Working Group. Cooperation within subgroups emphasized "counter narcotics, disaster relief, education, sovereignty of the seas, and military training."[68] Secretary Perry continued the cooperative work of General Sullivan and supported "ongoing military education and training efforts, and pointed to U.S.-sponsored military modernization plans that would help Mexico protect its air and sea sovereignty."[69] Secretary Perry also announced in 1995 that the Mexican Navy and Army would be participating in an international exercise with the United States. Mexican officials quickly denounced those intentions and "made it clear that U.S.-Mexican military cooperation was confined to the modernization of equipment, training courses, and the academic exchange of officers as well as the cooperation on the fight against drug trafficking and assistance in facing natural disasters."[70] Clearly, Mexican civilian government leaders wanted to keep their forces engaged in domestic issues with the support and training from the United States instead of focusing on international or regional issues outside of Mexico. However, Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo directed the Mexican Air Force, with the possible backing of the United States, to assist with the war on drugs and

[66] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 18.

[67] Ibid., 19.

[68] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 3.

[69] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 20.

[70] Ibid., 25.

intercept drug planes flying through the Gulf of Mexico bound for the United States and other gulf states.[71]

In 1996, General Cervantes visited the United States again to further cooperation efforts in several prepared initiatives between the two defense departments. U.S. military officials were proposing to give the Mexican Air Force 73 UH-1H helicopters to upgrade their Air Force and provide more capabilities to Special Operations.[72] Mexican military officials assumed these Vietnam-era helicopters were comparable to the cooperative aid U.S. military personnel gave to them from late 1980 to the early 1990s when Mexico received "10 times more U.S. arms than it accumulated between 1950–1983."[73] Aid in the form of U.S. F-5 planes, Bell helicopters, and communications equipment made its way to Mexico along with about $750 million in other U.S. military-affiliated equipment.[74] In 1997, Secretary Perry left office and the military relationship between the two countries began to taper off.[75] In 1999, Mexican military officials returned the UH-1H military helicopters to the United States because they were outdated and inadequate to the mission sets the Mexican military pursued, leaving Mexican government officials frustrated.

In 2000, the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Working Group held its last meeting between the two countries' defense departments. The two countries would receive a wakeup call in the months ahead as September 11, 2001, tested U.S. national security policies. The years following ushered in new cooperation efforts to respond to international threats in the region.

From the war on drugs to 9/11, we witness a shift in cooperation from realism to a more liberal approach. Mexico and the United States realized the drug trade from South and Central America was affecting their domestic security. Throughout this period,

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[71] Tim Golden, "Mexico Plans Bigger Role for Military Against Drugs: Air Force Jets to Intercept Cocaine Flights," *New York Times*, May 23, 1995, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[72] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 3.

[73] Wilson, "The Slippery Slope"

[74] Ibid.

[75] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 3.

Mexican military and U.S. military forces put formal institutions in place to combat drug traffickers. However, corruption within senior Mexican military ranks is a huge problem. In 1997, it was reported that senior military officials arrested a key drug dealer and later released him on the condition that he "clean up his business—halting the sale of drugs in Mexico, eschewing violence, helping the economy—if he was allowed to keep half his fortune and continue operating in peace."[76] This corruption diminishes formal institutions in place and restricts cooperation. Mexico cannot move past its historical realist ideology toward the United States and continues to view the United States with hesitation. However, established informal institutions, communicated in relationships, between individuals in the defense departments, further pushing a cooperative agenda to fight drug trafficking and other internal domestic security issues.

After 9/11, NORTHCOM formed to provide national security oversight of Mexico, Canada, and the United States. This creation would upset the Mexican government because the United States failed to include Mexico in the security initiatives of the Western Hemisphere defined by NORTHCOM. President Bush signed the Mérida Initiative in 2007, providing initial funding to Mexico of $48 million and annual funding through FY2016, totaling $2.6 billion. Finally, military cooperation efforts between the two countries continued to prosper with international naval exercises and coordinated efforts to combat drug trafficking. This period would provide further evidence that Mexican military and U.S. military cooperation occurred because of liberalism. The two countries established formal institutions to secure security and economic goals. While policies like the creation of NORTHCOM without Mexican input and Mexico's reaction to this event leans toward realist perspectives, it pales in comparison to the Mérida Initiative and its overarching construct to bond the two countries together.

E. 9/11 TO THE PRESENT

The events of September 11, 2001 provided the U.S. government with a new focus on national security. The United States needed to respond to a threat that attacked

[76] "Can the Military Resist Temptation?" *New York Times*, December 29, 1997, https://www.nytimes.com/.

New York and the Pentagon. Military cooperation efforts soon focused on allies and coalition partners in the Middle East, namely Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Pakistan, among others. The United States has given little attention to Latin America, especially Mexico. However, border issues and drug trafficking continued to increase and sporadically, the two militaries found ways to cooperate to combat the growing threats of TOC.

In 2001, the School of the Americas (SOA) was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSC). This school, located since 1984 in Fort Benning, Georgia, historically trained military officers and non-commissioned officers from Mexico on a frequent basis. WHINSC was previously located in Panama, but moved to the United States after the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty. From 1946 to 1995, "the school trained the relatively modest number of 766 Mexican military personnel in topics that included courses for combat, combat support, and combat service support officers and noncommissioned officers as well as leadership, intelligence, counterinsurgency, and specialized or technical skills."[77] From 1996 to 1997, almost 500 Mexican military students participated in courses offered at the school. U.S. military instructors led courses in Demolition, Special Operations, Civilian-Military Operations, Psychological Warfare Operations, and Staff Operations.[78] Training at other U.S. military bases occurred, too, most notably at Lackland Air Force Base for Mexican aviators and aviation mechanics.

In 2002, in response to the attacks on 9/11, the United States established NORTHCOM to promote national defense of the homeland and theater security defense within the region. NORTHCOM's "AOR includes air, land, and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, and Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles."[79] Canada and Mexico previously had no U.S. military oversight for national security.[80] Prior to 9/11,

[77] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 11.

[78] Ibid., 22.

[79] United States Northern Command, Department of Defense, last modified December 21, 2015, http://www.northcom.mil/About-USNORTHCOM/.

[80] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 4.

SOUTHCOM provided the funding to Mexican military and U.S. military representatives to carry out security cooperation training. Mexico did not like the United States unilaterally assigning Canada and Mexico to NORTHCOM without input from those countries.[81] Mexico felt that military cooperation in security of the hemisphere would work best if all three countries worked together to formulate a posture. Mexican Defense Secretary General Clemente Vega Garcia told his government that Mexico would not align with NORTHCOM demands.[82]

In 2004, Mexican military officials attended Unified Defense, an exercise in Texas sponsored by NORTHCOM. In September 2005, the Mexican Secretary of the Navy invited the NORTHCOM Commander to visit Mexico and witness a Mexican Independence celebration.[83]

In 2006, Mexico elected Felipe Calderon President. President Calderon was a huge supporter of the Mexican Navy cooperating with foreign navies in global exercises. Mexico participated in UNITAS, Latin for "unity," which is a naval exercise that began in 1960 combining navies from countries in North, Central, and South America. Mexico has participated in this exercise, since 2002, and cooperated with the United States on various training evolutions like maritime security, drug interdiction, and surface warfare operations. In 2006, Mexican President Calderon decided to use Mexican military forces together with local law enforcement to combat TOC networks. President Calderon felt corruption in law enforcement was at an unprecedented level and rightly assumed that the Mexican military could step in with the help of their United States counterparts to train them for this new mission because Mexico and the United States wanted to reduce narco-traffickers.[84] Mexican military forces were ill prepared to combat these drug cartels in urban centers, which forced them to cooperate and learn from U.S. military trainers

[81] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 4.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 29.

[84] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 12.

across the border.[85] Richard Downie argues, "President Calderon's tasking of his military to confront the Transnational Organized Criminal's in coordination with the United States placed the Mexican and U.S. militaries in a position to focus on a common threat on both sides of the border-for the first time in many years."[86] This is yet another example of one important individual having an impact on military cooperation efforts between the two countries.

In 2007, President George W. Bush signed the Mérida Initiative. The Mérida Initiative highlighted the importance of U.S./Mexican efforts to thwart drug violence in the border region. Downie argues that actions by President Bush prompted Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, to visit his Mexican counterparts and propose defense initiatives guided under the Mérida Initiative.[87] Secretary Gates, "emphasized that the U.S. Department of Defense would help train and develop educational and informational exchanges for Mexican forces in a manner deferential to Mexican sovereignty."[88] In short, Secretary Gates wanted to be clear that the U.S. military would respect Mexican sovereignty, understanding the historical relationship between the two countries. Mexican military officials warmly accepted U.S. assistance and, according to Downie, eagerly received "equipment, training, information, and intelligence exchanges, as well as a variety of programs regarding strategic and operational leadership and campaign planning."[89] Because of the Mérida Initiative, Mexican military units received advanced military equipment like "aircraft and helicopters, night vision goggles, rigid hull inflatable boats, and protective ensembles, as well as tactical communications equipment intended to improve the Mexican military's ability to deploy rapid reaction forces in support of police operations against drug cartels and to help conduct maritime surveillance."[90] This equipment, as well as the training Mexican military personnel

[85] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 12.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 13.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

received, directly affected the ability of Mexican forces to take down criminal gangs.[91] That same year, the Mexican Navy Secretariat (SEMAR) placed an official at NORTHCOM to create a communications channel between NORTHCOM officials and SEMAR officials in Mexico. This further prompted NORTHCOM, in 2008, to host multiple Mexican military officials in Texas for a Border Commanders Conference (BBC) to discuss "border security issues, shared information, and addressed lessons learned."[92] The Mérida Initiative also provided approximately $420 million to the Mexican military and fell under the auspice of the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program.[93]

In 2009, U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, met with the Mexican Secretary of the Navy and other high-ranking military officials in Mexico. They focused their meetings on drug enforcement, cartels, and corruption.[94] This meeting also influenced the Mexican Senate to authorize "the participation of substantial Mexican Navy components in the exercise series UNITAS 50–90 from 19 April to May 2009."[95] This substantial participation included multiple Mexican frigates, helicopters, multiple Mexican Marine platoons, and other support units. The Mexican Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) placed its own representative at NORTHCOM to ensure official communication channels were open between the two military agencies.

In 2010, Admiral James Winnefeld assumed command of NORTHCOM. Admiral Winnefeld quickly understood the importance of a relationship between the U.S. and Mexican militaries.[96] Admiral Winnefeld "placed a high priority on engagement with Mexico and conducted several personal visits with his Mexican counterparts. He also ensured that key members of his staff traveled frequently to Mexico to work closely with

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[91] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 13.

[92] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 31.

[93] Jonathan Agustin Gonzalez Torres, "U.S.-Mexico Military Cooperation: From WWII to the Mérida Initiative," *Banderas News*, October 14, 2010, http://www.banderasnews.com/1010/edat-usmexcooperation.htm.

[94] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 36.

[95] Ibid., 37.

[96] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 14.

the Mexican military on a wide range of information-sharing, intelligence, and campaign-planning-related programs."[97] In 2011, news outlets reported that unarmed U.S. military drones flew intelligence collection missions into Mexican airspace to help assist Mexican military and local law enforcement officers.[98] This information collaboration highlights cooperation efforts between the two countries to combat common drug trafficking practices.

In 2012, President Barack Obama's foreign policy objective was to pivot the United States from the Central Command (CENTCOM) Middle East AOR and concentrate more on the Pacific Command (PACOM) region, specifically Asia, once again putting Latin America on the backburner and out of sight. Military officials at NORTHCOM and SOUTHCOM continue to focus on the Western Hemisphere with regard to military cooperation, especially with Mexico. In 2013, Army Major General Francis G. Mahon, NORTHCOM's Director for Strategy Plans and Policy, outlined security cooperation efforts the United States and Mexico are taking to combat the common threat of TOCs in the Western Hemisphere. General Mahon points out that the Mexican Army and Navy are moving beyond traditional internal security objectives, and with the cooperation of the United States, focusing more on "humanitarian assistance and disaster response throughout the region."[99] U.S. military officials at NORTHCOM are currently assisting Mexico with purchasing military grade C-130J Hercules Aircraft as well as RC-26 planes and UH-60 Blackhawks.[100] In 2013, NORTHCOM ushered Mexican military doctors to Afghanistan to experience how American military doctors practice medicine on the battlefield. Finally, in October 2013, Mexican military officials participated in an international joint military exercise, a first for Mexico in air defense. The scenario called for "a rogue aircraft that flies from the United States into Mexico.

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[97] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 14.

[98] Ginger Thompson and Mark Mazzetti, "U.S. Drones Fly Deep in Mexico to Fight Drugs," *New York Times*, March 16, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[99] Donna Miles, "NORTHCOM Pursues Closer Engagement with Mexico," *American Forces Press Service*, January 22, 2013, http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119074.

[100] Ibid.

U.S. interceptor aircraft scrambled by North American Aerospace Defense Command will shadow the aircraft until it enters Mexican airspace, and then will transfer the mission to the Mexican air force."[101] These changes within the Mexican military to focus more on international and regional objectives instead of internal missions will likely lead to more cooperation with U.S. military personnel because U.S. military forces are also focused on international mission sets.

Also in 2013, Mexican military and U.S. military officials butted heads with regard to rooting out corruption among Mexican security officials.[102] The United States officials conducted polygraph tests on their Mexican counterparts to see if anyone within the joint drug trafficking task force was providing secrets to drug cartels.[103] Mexican officials felt little trust of their U.S. counterparts, who were not required to take the polygraph test.[104] This small event may pale compared to others, but it highlights the continued skepticism of the Mexican military toward the United States.

In analyzing cooperation from 9/11 to present day, the U.S. and Mexican militaries continue to move in a liberal direction, establishing formal institutions to foster cooperation efforts against drug trafficking, and providing common defense of the Western Hemisphere. Proponents of realism would argue that treaties and other documents signed by the two countries would break apart if one country felt another country violated its sovereignty or a power struggle ensued; I would argue that scenario would not occur. The United States recognizes the historical differences between the two countries and therefore respects Mexican sovereignty and understands that cooperation needs to form slowly with trust and transparency. Mexico, always on guard, respects the formal institutions put in place to enhance cooperation, and knows that cooperation with the United States brings in money and valuable training to help in combating drug trafficking and domestic issues, things Mexico desperately needs.

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[101] Miles, "NORTHCOM Pursues Closer Engagement."

[102] Randal C. Archibold, Damien Cave, and Ginger Thompson, "New Friction as Mexico Curbs U.S. Cooperation in Drug War," *New York Times*, May 1, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

F. ANALYSIS

Analyzing each international relations theory occurred based on the independent variables of external security and internal instability. As indicated in Table 1, realism best explains international relations from the 1800s to present day between the United States and Mexico. Table 2 is a consideration of whether cooperation occurred, and the reasons why or why not cooperation occurred. Realism appears to be the driving force in cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican militaries, and the reason why cooperation failed many years ago. Over the last couple of decades, a shift in economic cooperation aligned with security interests, changed the realist mindset of the two countries. This gave way to more liberal thought on cooperation.

Table 1. Analyzing how each Hypothesis Applies to Relations between the United States and Mexico[105]

	Realism	**Liberalism**	**Constructivism**
Prior to WWII	Yes	No	No
WWII to War on Drugs	Yes	No	No
War on Drugs to 9/11	Yes	Yes	Yes
9/11 to Present	Yes	Yes	No
Total:	4	2	1

[105] Table 1 is adapted from Graham H. Turbiville Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future." *Joint Special Operations University Report 10–2*. Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2010. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA516048; Richard D. Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico: The Future of U.S./Mexican Defense Relations." *Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 5–35. http://chds.dodlive.mil/files/2013/12/pub-OP-downie1.pdf; Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface." *Strategic Forum*, no. 243 (2009): 1–12. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA504170.

Table 2. Reasons for U.S. Military and Mexican Military Cooperation[106]

	Cooperation	Reason
Prior to WWII	None	No cooperation existed. The two countries were external security threats to each other.
WWII to War on Drugs	Low	Limited cooperation existed. The two countries cooperated internationally against a common enemy, the Axis powers, but sovereignty issues along the Mexican border limited cooperation.
War on Drugs to 9/11	High	Cooperation existed because the two countries saw a need to combat drug trafficking. Establishing formal institutions to facilitate cooperation efforts, and civilian leadership in Mexico, became more conservative and aligned with U.S. thought.
9/11 to Present	High	Cooperation exists today to combat drug trafficking, internal instability within Mexico, and regional security in the Western Hemisphere. Developing formal institutions, like the Mérida Initiative, continue to facilitate cooperation.

G. CONCLUSION

Given the rollercoaster history of military cooperation from the middle 1800s to the present day, obstacles engrained in the two countries prevent complete cooperation. In today's dynamic security environment affected by climate change, terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug enforcement, human smuggling, and border security, it is paramount that the military service branches from the two countries come together and cooperate to combat these events. Mexico will likely need to make political changes within its own government to make any noticeable changes in military cooperation. Likewise, the United States will need to be sensitive to Mexican military history and the

[106] Table 2 is adapted from Graham H. Turbiville Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future." *Joint Special Operations University Report 10–2*. Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2010. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA516048; Richard D. Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico: The Future of U.S./Mexican Defense Relations." *Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 5–35. http://chds.dodlive.mil/files/2013/12/pub-OP-downie1.pdf; Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface." *Strategic Forum*, no. 243 (2009): 1–12. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA504170.

challenges Mexico faced when the United States expanded into Mexican territory in the latter half of the 1800s.

Overall, the two countries need to understand they have different security ambitions for their respective militaries. The Mexican military focuses more on the internal threat from drug cartels, TOCs, and human trafficking.[107] The Mexican government has tasked its military to assist law enforcement branches in enforcing the law, whereas the U.S. military follows laws that forbid it from enforcing laws on citizens within its borders. The United States uses its military for different purposes, mainly fighting external threats and taking the fight to the enemy overseas. Mexican military officials may see this as United States' encroachment on its sovereignty, even if it is just a training evolution in country or an assist visit for a mission. The U.S. military would view it as normal business. For the two militaries to cooperate at a high level, a thorough understanding of each other's mission at all military ranks, and an equal understanding of common security goals, is essential. Today, that communication is developing, highlighted by a recent phone conversation between Defense Secretary James Mattis, Mexico's Secretary of National Defense General Salvador Zepeda, and Secretary of the Navy Admiral Vidal Sanz, during which the three discussed "their commitment to the North American Defense Ministerial process, and working with Canada to address mutual defense challenges to North America."[108]

[107] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 10.

[108] Jeff Davis, "Readout of Secretary Mattis' Call with Mexico Secretary of National Defense General Salvador Cienfuegos Zepeda and Secretary of the Navy Admiral Vidal Soberón Sanz," *Defense News*, February 7, 2017, https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1075366/readout-of-secretary-mattis-call-with-mexico-secretary-of-national-defense-gene/.

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III. EVALUATING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND COLOMBIAN MILITARIES

A. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. military and Colombian military have never engaged one another in all-out combat operations as the U.S. and Mexican militaries had in the late 1800s. Cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian militaries from the 1800s to just before World War II did not happen because the United States supported Panama breaking off from Colombia, forcing the two militaries to assume defensive. During World War II, however, the two countries found common ground in defending the Panama Canal from Axis powers. This common ground led to many military cooperation events and would serve as a catalyst for future military cooperation.

From World War II through the United States' 1972 war on drugs declaration, the Colombian military and the U.S. military cooperated together in foreign engagements, like the Korean War, where Colombian military units supported U.S. military units on the Korean Peninsula. The Colombian and U.S. militaries cooperated to combat the war on drugs in Colombia by taking down major drug kingpins and combating the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and against TOCs moving drugs from Colombia to the United States. After 9/11, Colombian military and U.S. military officials further enhanced cooperation by signing multiple agreements allowing U.S. military service members to permanently serve within Colombian borders to advise, train, and assist Colombian military units in combatting the drug problem, as well as providing up to $10 billion in aid.

Within the last five years, Colombian military and U.S. military personnel have continued to train in Colombia, in the United States, and in other Latin American countries. The two countries continue to lead in exercises like UNITAS, and Colombia is starting to take what it has learned from the U.S. military to train other countries like Mexico. Renewed partnership agreements continue and funds to combat drug trafficking remain.

Focused efforts by individuals either helped foster cooperative efforts between the defense services or damaged the situation through fighting or political posturing. While bilateral military cooperation started out with the common defense of the Panama Canal during World War II, today the two countries need to continue to build partnerships to enhance security efforts in the Caribbean and Central America at the military level in order to reduce drug flows into the United States.

This chapter analyzes major events that took place from the early 1900s to the present day between the Colombian and U.S. militaries. It further answers the question: what explains the variation in timing and substance in cooperation between the U.S. and Colombia? I argue, in tune with realist perspectives, that cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian militaries occurs when the two countries benefit from cooperating against external security threats, and when the two countries share economic interests in the region. International relations theory can help explain reasons why two or more states cooperate with each other. The realist argument is the strongest explanation for when and why Colombia and the United States cooperate militarily. Formal institutions established between the two governments solidify their commitment to each other to achieve common goals, but these institutions formed because the two countries shared in defending a common economic interest like the Panama Canal. These individual relationships continue today with officer exchange programs for training purposes and combined military units working hand-in-hand in Colombia to combat the drug problem. Informal relationships between individuals eventually grow into formal institutions like treaties and cooperation agreements. Constructionism could explain some of the social relationship efforts moving toward cooperation. However, if corruption exists in the Colombian Army, police, and court system, it will likely prevent reliable social relationships from forming. Cooperation between the two countries occurs because of common threats to national security in the region, historically good formal and informal institutions, mutually beneficial economic ties, and their preferences toward each other within their institutions. This became apparent during World War II and blossomed even more with Colombia's internal domestic drug issues with organizations like the FARC. Continued military cooperation will occur as long as the two countries favor a common

external security goal to fight drug trafficking, establish informal relationships with key personnel, and create written partnership agreements that provide fair prosperity.

B. PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

The Colombian civil war, referred to as the Thousand Days' War, lasted from 1899 until late 1902. Leaders from the two parties signed a peace agreement aboard the U.S. Navy battleship, USS *Wisconsin* (BB-64). The signing on a U.S. Navy ship is significant because it showed the Colombians trusted U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and the U.S. military.[109] President Roosevelt wanted regional stability in the area because of proposals for a canal connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean. United States and Colombian representatives agreed on the Panama Canal prior to 1903, but the plan failed to pass the Colombian Senate, discouraging a frustrated President Roosevelt.[110] In 1903, Panama seceded from Colombia and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began building the Panama Canal. This United States course of action prompted the Colombian government to send Colombian military units to the area.[111] The U.S. Navy prevented the Colombian Navy from entering the Isthmus of Panama and U.S. Marines stationed ashore protected American citizens from Colombian troops moving north. Bradley Coleman, an historian expert in Colombia-U.S. relations and the current command historian at SOUTHCOM, argues, "Colombia and the United States needed the next thirty years to undo the damage inflicted in 1903."[112] However, like war between Mexico and the United States, military armed action between Colombia and the United States did not happen.

In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave a passionate speech in his inaugural address to the people of the United States. In his "Good Neighbor Policy" speech, President Roosevelt wanted to shape the U.S. relationship with Latin America by

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[109] Russell W. Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea and Suez," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 9, no. 4 (1967): 543, http://www.jstor.org/stable/164859.

[110] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 4–5.

[111] Ibid., 5.

[112] Ibid.

stressing cooperation and economic commerce instead of using the U.S. military to stabilize the Western Hemisphere. This foreign policy change was a good sign to countries in Latin America who were used to U.S. military interventions in the early 1900s.

In 1938, three U.S. Army "Flying Fortress" airplanes landed in Bogota, Colombia. President Roosevelt sent these U.S. Army planes as a sign of peace and unity between Colombia and the United States "during the inauguration of Colombian President Eduardo Santos Montejo."[113] The U.S. Army pilots mingled with Colombian military leaders and officials over the course of a few days, leading Colombian President Montejo to express his appreciation for and enthusiasm about the pilots, and ultimately asking U.S. civilian representatives to send U.S. military personnel to assist his own military.[114] Coleman argues that President Montejo felt U.S. military training would enhance his own military capabilities and "promote bilateral cooperation during a time of international security."[115] A strong relationship that started on the civilian side between the two Presidents eventually moved to military officers from the two countries. That same year, "the United States government announced … that naval and military air missions [would] go to the Republic of Colombia soon to cooperate with that country in improving its defensive forces."[116] This was in response to the Colombians asking for U.S. military assistance and the United States agreeing, in writing, to provide military advisory support to the Colombians.[117]

In 1939, right after the Lima Conference, U.S. military advisors entered Colombia, began training Colombian military counterparts, and established relationships that would lead to military cooperation during World War II.[118] The two countries

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[113] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 1.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] "Colombia to get Arms Missions: Naval and Military Air Experts to Study Defense of Republic," *Los Angeles Times*, November 27, 1938, http://www.latimes.com/.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 9.

realized they needed military cooperation to protect and defend the Panama Canal because it was a strategic choke point employed by the U.S. Navy to move warships between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Colombian Navy also used the canal to move its warships and commercial vessels. President Montejo continuously reaffirmed his commitment to President Roosevelt, viewing the Panama Canal "as vital to the life of American and vital to the defense of the United States."[119] Much like treaties that bind two or more countries today, this bilateral security cooperation effort between Colombia and the United States likely hinged on a verbal commitment within a strong relationship between the two Presidents and the defense department leaders.

Coleman argues, "in 1939, two important staff tours promoted bilateral understanding, critical to accomplishing the Colombia-American military agenda in the years ahead."[120] The two meetings that occurred in 1939 would lead to further cooperation in the future. Colombian Army General Luis Acevedo and his staff of senior officers met with U.S. Army Major General David Stone and his staff at the Panama Canal to discuss Panama Canal defenses, observe U.S. Army exercises, and regional security involvement.[121] In that same year, General Stone and his staff flew to Bogota, Colombia to witness Colombian military forces practicing "infantry artillery, cavalry school maneuvers, and inspected medical corps facilities and the institute of military geography."[122] This visit highlighted the "shared responsibility" between the two countries to defend strategic points in the Western Hemisphere together and identify possible miscues or perceptions of each other in achieving defense goals.[123]

A realist argument best explains when and why Colombia and the United States cooperated during this period: the two countries shared a common external security threat to economic stability. Individuals in the U.S. and Colombian militaries, who had

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[119] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States,* 11.

[120] Ibid., 17.

[121] Ibid., 17–18.

[122] Ibid., 18.

[123] Ibid.

foresight to see a lack of government engagement in the region, likely, used backchannels to open dialogue and cooperation efforts to combat an imminent attack from the Axis countries against the Panama Canal.

World War II would provide the two countries with more opportunities to cooperate. The two shared the common defense of the Panama Canal and would work together to establish a Defense Command to accomplish that goal. The Panama Canal is a strategic economic chokepoint that required protection from a host of countries that had the means to do so. Colombia and the United States were the two major players because Colombian territory was near the entrance and exit points and the United States built the canal. Colombian military and U.S. military cooperation would also extend past the Western Hemisphere in foreign conflicts like the Korean War. Colombia, a regional power and a country that likely wanted recognition on the international stage, contributed its military cooperation efforts to the United Nations, other allies, and the United States, against threats from other countries around the globe.

C. WORLD WAR II TO THE WAR ON DRUGS

In 1941, the United States established the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command in Panama. This command would defend the Panama Canal and provide forces to defend Colombia from German attacks from the east and western attacks from Japan.[124] Plans within the command called for U.S. forces to occupy major ports and cities in Colombia. Colombian President Santos argued to his own people that it was necessary for Colombia to guard such a strategic point, stating, "Inter-American economic cooperation should be converted into deeds with the stronger assisting the weaker nations," because he knew he would need the United States' support to make such a commitment.[125] Colombian military officials and the president himself did not object to such a plan should the need arise, and opened Colombian airports to the command throughout the duration of the

[124] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 24.

[125] "Colombia Rallies to U.S. Support by Guarding Door to Panama Canal," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 13, 1940, http://www.csmonitor.com/.

war.[126] Colombia assigned Colombian Army General Pablo Lopez to be the liaison between Colombia and the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command.

In 1942, U.S. and Colombian government officials signed a security partnership focusing on military bilateral cooperation in domestic security and counterespionage against the Axis powers in the Western Hemisphere.[127] Bradley Coleman argues, "the country's wartime contribution, combined with the efforts of the other Latin American republics, allowed the United States to focus on overseas operation."[128] Later that year, a German submarine attacked and sank the Colombian Navy ship ARC *Resolute* north of Colombia. German submariners then targeted the abandoning crew, killing many.[129] This triggered an even greater resolve for Colombia to cooperate with the United States against the Axis powers.

World War II may have been a wakeup call for the Colombian government to reach out to the United States to help strengthen its own military apparatus. U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull and the Ambassador to Colombia signed a written agreement to train the Colombian military.[130] Colombian officials placed U.S. military advisors in Colombian military schools to train forces in ground movement tactics, effective leadership skills, and communications.[131] U.S. military advisors taught courses in advanced weapons handling, communications, and land navigation. However, a series of events, highlighted by Coleman, would likely be the key to cooperation efforts for years to come. U.S. military and Colombian military construction and engineering officers worked together to build projects around the country. Coleman points out, "During that work, U.S. military personnel had their first contact with Lieutenant Colonel Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, the chief of the Colombian Army engineering section and future

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[126] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 24.

[127] Ibid., 1.

[128] Ibid., 2.

[129] Ibid., 12–13.

[130] "Colombia Signs Military Pact," *New York Times*, May 30, 1942, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[131] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 23.

president of Colombia."[132] Leaving a solid foundation of good cooperation in Colonel Pinilla's mind would likely have resulted in greater cooperation later.

The U.S. military and Colombian military cooperated during the Korean War because the Colombian government wanted to support the United States, and United Nations, in stopping communism. Colombia provided an infantry battalion and a naval vessel to fight in Korea alongside U.S. military counterparts in 1951. The naval vessel, offered by Colombia to patrol the Korean waters, was the *Almirante Padilla*, a frigate-class ship outfitted for combat by U.S. Sailors and civilians during a port-of-call at Naval Base San Diego, California, before steaming to Korea.[133] Colombian soldiers arrived in Korea by way of a U.S. transportation vessel *Aiken Victory* because the Colombians had no large navy ships to transport their military units across the Pacific Ocean.[134] Russell Ramsey investigated the purpose of this Colombian unit and concluded, "the Colombian Battalion fought as part of a U.S. division throughout the entire conflict. On December 9, the battalion was presented the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation by General James Van Fleet, and on January 4, 1953, it received the U.N. service medal."[135] While fighting alongside their U.S. military counterparts, the Colombians lost 131 men and 448 others sustained combat wounds.[136] Bradley Coleman argues, "Colombia demonstrated to the United States its reliability in the campaign against international communism, setting the scene for greater postwar bilateral cooperation."[137] Colombia really had no economic ties to the Korea Peninsula, but likely felt that a commitment to support the United States' democratic values around the world could potentially open new partnerships and cooperation efforts domestically.

In 1955, the U.S. Army decided to create a course in Colombia similar to its U.S. Army Ranger school. Colombians call this course the "Lancero" course; it still trains

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[132] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, 23.

[133] Ramsey, "The Colombian Battalion in Korea," 546.

[134] Ibid., 547.

[135] Ibid., 548.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Coleman, *Colombia and the United States*, xiii.

Colombian military and U.S. military soldiers today.[138] U.S. Army personnel continue to go through this course and integrate into the staff to teach future trainees. Colombian soldiers learn combat skills in various environments like the jungle and mountains at advanced courses taught at the Lancero course. U.S. Army soldiers developed this course with their Colombian counterparts to ensure the "success of the U.S. security cooperation mission in Colombia because it helps build the capabilities of the Colombian Army" continues, and it creates "a stronger regional and global partner capable of assisting the United States and other countries in military training and operations."[139]

From 1954 to 1964 in Colombia, Georgia, and Texas, U.S. military advisors trained roughly 250 Colombian army soldiers to combat domestic insurgencies, and increased that number by 50 more Colombian army soldiers in 1964 because the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) posed a direct threat to domestic stability in Colombia.[140] Colombian military units tried to disrupt PCC activities in the rural areas, but the disruption eventually gave birth to the FARC organization.[141] U.S. military and Colombian military units would find themselves cooperating extensively for decades to combat this organization.

Agreements signed between Colombia, the United States, and the United Nations define the military cooperation that occurred during this period. Proponents of liberalism could explain why the two countries entered into formal agreements and pushed their military units to cooperate with each other. However, proponents of realism can best explain why the two governments cooperated to defend the Panama Canal. A formal agreement to establish a defense command solidified that common economic goal. Proponents of realism could also explain why Colombia jumped at UN offers to support the Korean conflict because Colombia wanted to ally with the big states selling their anti-

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[138] Jane Crichton, "U.S. Army Military Personnel Exchange Program in Colombia Strengthens Armies," *Army News Service*, May 25, 2011, https://www.army.mil/article/58119/.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Chelsey Dyer, "50 Years of U.S. Intervention in Colombia II," *Colombia Reports*, October 15, 2013, http://colombiareports.com/94669.

[141] Ibid.

communist rhetoric. Finally, the United States and Colombia likely established contracts to make the Colombians ready to fight at sea and on land.

The 1990s would see Colombian military and U.S. military units retreat from cooperation efforts mainly due to corruption within Colombian ranks spurred by powerful drug leaders. Colombian government officials and law enforcement personnel would likely warn drug traffickers of upcoming counter-drug missions, effectively saving them from interdictions and raids. It would take key U.S. military officials to recognize the internal political instability in Colombia, get the U.S. Congress on board to fund military cooperation to stop the drug trafficking that was causing the instability, and target the terrorist groups in Colombia that were threatening future stabilization. This period saw the implementation of Plan Colombia, which would provide almost $8 billion through 2012 to reduce drug trafficking and combat organizations like the FARC.

D. WAR ON DRUGS TO 9/11

U.S. military and Colombian military cooperation and financial aid dropped off during the early 1990s because of human-rights abuses coming from the Colombian military.[142] United States money still flowed in, but from other government agencies like the Department of State, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and CIA. This funding allowed their Colombian counterparts to continue to reduce drug trafficking with minimal military intervention. However, a few military cooperation efforts, like military combat training in Colombia and the United States with Special Operations Forces, still existed.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush was present at a summit on illicit drugs in Cartagena, Colombia. Security concerns for President Bush were high, and Colombian military and U.S. military officials agreed to provide naval vessels off the coast of Colombia for security support. Before, during, and briefly after the summit, a U.S. amphibious ship, a U.S. destroyer and a Colombian military vessel sailed together, likely conducting training evolutions as a Surface Action Group (SAG) while providing ready

[142] Douglas Farah and Geoffrey Mohan, "THE AMERICAS/A Weekly Look at People and Issues in Latin America/U.S. Re-Engages Colombian Army/Aid to help combat drug-trafficking rebels," *Washington Post*, January 10, 1999, https://www.washingtonpost.com/.

security to units in Colombia.[143] President Bush contemplated talking to Colombian officials about establishing a few U.S. Navy ships off the coast of Colombia to interdict drug shipments by air and sea.[144] This action showed that the two countries could steam together, and likely strengthened his argument that coalition ships permanently stationed off the coast of Colombia could be successful. However, Colombian civilians hated the idea of permanent U.S. Navy ships off their coastline.[145]

In 1991, U.S. Special Forces assisted Colombian military units with the take down and capture of Pablo Escobar, a notorious drug lord who led a drug trade organization responsible for almost 80% of all cocaine entering the United States.[146] However, shortly after his arrest, Escobar escaped from jail with the help of military officials and local police.[147] In 1993, the U.S. Congress decided to fund the Colombian National Police (CNP) instead of the Colombian military because congressional leaders thought the CNP had less corruption.[148] However, in 1994, U.S. congressional leaders amended their position and entrusted "the U.S. Secretary of State to certify that military assistance to Colombia will be used primarily for counter narcotics activities."[149] U.S. civilian leadership restricted military cooperation because the Colombian military had proved incapable of fending off corruption and unable to reduce human rights abuses. U.S. Army General Barry R. McCaffrey had to step in and ease the tensions between the two countries. It is possible that a relationship was established between General McCaffrey and Colombian General Manuel Jose Bonett during General McCaffrey's visit

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[143] David Lauter, "2 U.S. Ships on Station off Colombia for Drug Summit War on Cocaine: The Pentagon Cites Logistical support. Amphibious Vessel Carriers Marines," *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1990, http://www.latimes.com/.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Dean A. Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm and the Shaping of U.S. Military Engagement in Colombia, 1997–2000," in *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Derek S. Reveron (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 132.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Michael Evans, ed., *War in Colombia: Guerrillas, Drugs and Human Rights in U.S. Colombia Policy, 1988–2002* (Washington, DC: National Security Archives, 2002), 1.

[149] Ibid.

to Colombia, in 1997, because General Bonett claimed the meeting was a "turning point" with "a stronger desire to understand us now, to not consider us the bad guys" as it related to trusting the Colombian military.[150] Also in 1994, U.S. military engineers cooperating with their Colombian counterparts to build schools and other structures in Colombia faced mounting criticism from civilian leaders in the Colombian congress.[151] Colombian President Cesar Gaviria came to the aid of this cooperation effort, calling the criticism political banter.[152] Many Colombian citizens felt the U.S. military presence amounted to occupation of their country.[153] However, likely based on strong relationships, the Colombian president and the military continued with their planned operations.

In 1997, General Charles E. Wilhelm assumed command of USSOUTHCOM. Dean Cook argues that General Wilhelm "played a significant role in shaping United States policy toward Colombia" by shifting internal counterdrug joint operations from U.S./Colombian National Police to U.S. Military/Colombian Military cooperation.[154] During his three-year tour, General Wilhelm oversaw the implementation of "Plan Colombia," a program approved in 2000 and designed to provide $1.3 billion to Colombia to fight drug trafficking in the region, and about 80% of all funds went to the Colombian military.[155] Colombia and the United States realized the FARC posed a security concern within Colombia. Drugs were flowing in and out of Colombia, and violence in the countryside continued to rise.[156]

Colombian military forces found themselves outgunned and outmanned by internal armed organizations, like the National Liberation Army (ELN) or FARC, when

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[150] Michael Evans, ed., *War in Colombia: Guerrillas*, 1.

[151] "Colombia's Leader Defends Presence of G.I.'s," *New York Times*, February 10, 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm," 127.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid., 128.

the situation escalated.[157] Cook argues that a defining moment occurred in March 1998 within the Colombian military, exposing institutional inadequacies to deal with armed groups. Cook states, "while conducting search and destroy operations, two companies of the Colombian Army's 52nd Counter-Guerilla Battalion began to pursue what they though was a small band of FARC soldiers. In fact, the companies fell into a carefully prepared ambush by a FARC force of at least 400 fighters. When the fighting ended, 62 soldiers were dead, 47 were wounded, and 43 had been captured by the FARC."[158] General Wilhelm rightly looked at this situation and knew the Colombians needed United States military security cooperation to assist his Colombian military counterparts. In December 1998, U.S. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen and the newly elected President of Colombia, Andres Pastrana, "announced steps … to intensify military cooperation in the war on drug trafficking, including a pledge to increase Pentagon training of Colombia's armed forces and to share more aerial and satellite intelligence data."[159] The relationship built between these two leaders likely started a military cooperation effort to fight drug trafficking against TOCs with Colombia receiving U.S. military training, and the U.S. benefiting from improved regional security and influence to stop drug flows into the United States. The two leaders signed an agreement to solidify an arrangement that provided regular military-to-military open-door communication.[160]

Through his position, General Wilhelm looked at the dire situation in Colombia and felt the United States played too small a role in combating the problems the Colombian military faced. Cook argues, "the Colombian military was the only public institution that warranted a large U.S. investment," and that the U.S. military should engage with Colombian military anti-drug units to tackle the FARC and other TOC groups operating in the remote areas of Colombia.[161] General Wilhelm met with

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[157] Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm," 128.

[158] Ibid., 130.

[159] Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. Pledges Military Cooperation to Colombia in Drug War," *New York Times*, December 1, 1998, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm," 145.

Colombian Army Commander General Mora in January of 1999 to discuss possible counterdrug assistance and cooperation opportunities.[162] After that meeting, SOUTHCOM sent U.S. military planners to Colombia to assist Colombian forces with their counterdrug missions, along with $7 million to train and equip Colombian forces. This would be the beginning of a renewed relationship between the U.S. military and the Colombians. Eventually, General Wilhelm would fight for Plan Colombia, an aid package that would turn a dilapidated Colombian military into a fighting force, equipped and trained by the United States, ready to take on the FARC. When General Wilhelm retired in 2003, Colombian General Mora called Wilhelm, "Colombia's favorite friend in the United States."[163]

Colombia and the United States realized they needed to work together to reduce drug violence and internal instability caused by the FARC. Realism best explains military cooperation during this time period because Colombia knew it needed the U.S. military to help in strengthening its military to reduce domestic issues causing internal instability, and the United States needed Colombia to assist with the drug trafficking moving drugs from South and Central America to the United States. Formal and informal institutions played a crucial role during this period, mainly coming from Plan Colombia, which gave Colombians the money and military support they needed to combat the drug trade and fight organizations like the FARC and ELN.

The effects of 9/11 would usher in more security cooperation efforts in the Western Hemisphere. U.S. military service members found themselves growing in numbers, at Colombian military installations, training Colombian military officials. A push to label TOC organizations, like the FARC as terrorists, gained ground and renewed cooperation efforts between U.S. military and Colombian military units. The FARC caused internal instability within Colombia, and the Colombians likely knew they needed U.S. military assistance to combat this growing internal threat. A change in the law would allow the Colombians to use funds from Plan Colombia to fight the FARC.

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[162] Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm," 148.

[163] Ibid., 157.

E. 9/11 TO PRESENT

September 11, 2001 brought a renewed commitment by the U.S. military to take the fight to terrorist organizations around the world. The FARC, labeled a terrorist organization in Colombia by the United States in October 1997, would soon see Colombian military and U.S. military forces cooperate to destroy their will to fight. In 2002, "the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on President Bush to submit legislation to assist the Government of Colombia to protect its democracy from United States-designated foreign terrorist organizations."[164] This would allow Colombia to use U.S. aid, set aside for combating drugs in Plan Colombia, to fight organizations deemed as terrorists. In October 2002, U.S. military advisers provided military training to roughly 4,000 Colombian soldiers, along with weapons and equipment, to fight the FARC.[165] Jim Rochlin argues that "between 1999 and 2004, some 32, 458 Colombians received U.S. military training, and by 2003 Colombia was the recipient of more U.S. training than any other country."[166] This training likely served two purposes: Colombian military units could now go on the offensive and take the fight to the FARC, and the United States, under the cover of labeling the FARC terrorists, could tackle the TOC drug trade flowing from Colombia into the United States.

In 2004, the SOUTHCOM Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL), Army Command Sergeant Major Michael M. Balch, expanded a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) course for the Colombian Army, Airforce, and Navy in Miami, Florida.[167] This 11-week course, offered twice a year, focuses on tactical and strategic leadership at the enlisted level instead of the standard weapons and field training Colombians typically receive from U.S. advisors.

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[164] Ingrid Vaicius and Adam Isacson, "The War on Drugs meets the War on Terror: The United States' military involvement in Colombia climbs to the next level," *International Policy Report* (2003): 11.

[165] Jim Rochlin, "Plan Colombia and the Revolution in Military Affairs: The Demise of the FARC," *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 2 (2011): 734, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23024617.

[166] Ibid.

[167] "Southern Command Builds Latin American Capacity through NCOS," *Info-Prod Research*, February 8, 2009, http://www.infoprod.co.il/.

In July 2008, Colombian military and U.S. military units worked together to rescue former "Colombian Senator Ingrid Betancourt and three U.S. military contractors," who worked for SOUTHCOM on reconnaissance systems.[168] The FARC kidnapped Betancourt in February 2002. Betancourt belonged to the Green party in Colombia and likely held different views that threatened the FARC politically. The Colombian military led the rescue effort, but Colombian military and U.S. military intelligence officials cooperated behind the scenes.[169] U.S. military units also trained their Colombian counterparts in rescue techniques and other training directives.[170] The operation itself was secret and U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield gave little details about the mission to press questions. Yet, this small event between the two militaries showed the strength in military cooperation between the United States and Colombia.

In October 2009, Colombian and U.S. civilian officials signed a military cooperation agreement allowing U.S. military units access to seven Colombian military bases.[171] The two parties signed this cooperation agreement "in an effort to boost anti-drug and counter-insurgency operations."[172] U.S. Congressional leaders set a cap of 800 U.S. military personnel in Colombia at a time prior to the agreement. From 2000 to 2009, Colombia received about $6 billion in military aid and will likely receive another $46 million with this new agreement.[173]

Since 2010, the U.S. Army stationed flight instructors in Melgar, Colombia, assigned to the Colombian Regional Helicopter Training Center. Since 2001, USSOUTHCOM provided U.S. Army advisors, in a temporary status, to train at this facility. U.S. government officials felt cooperation between Colombia and the United States were moving in the right direction and granted permanent training status in

168 Frank Bajak, "Colombian Military Rescues Hostages," *Deseret News*, July 3, 2008, http://www.deseretnews.com/.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Hugh Bronstein, "Colombia, U.S. Sign Military Cooperation Deal," *Reuters*, October 30, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-colombia-usa-bases-idUSTRE59T1S720091030.

172 Ibid.

173 Bronstein, "Colombia, U.S. Sign Military Cooperation Deal."

2010.[174] These U.S. Army instructors train 50 Colombian and 24 international military pilots annually in basic helicopter operations. The school operates 30 Bell OH-58 helicopters used actively by the U.S. Army from 1969 to 2016.[175] The U.S. government provides funding for the U.S. Army instructors, training helicopters, and associated parts and support for maintenance.[176]

In 2013, SOUTHCOM Commander John Kelly and Colombian Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon started UNITAS 2013 in Cartagena, Colombia. The Colombians hosted UNITAS 2013, a naval exercise combining 15 countries, designed to strengthen cooperation at sea. Rear Admiral Sinclair Harris stated, "participants in UNITAS 2013 [would] focus on coalition building, multilateral security cooperation, tactical interoperability and mutual understanding among the participants."[177]

On February 4, 2015, then U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, visited Colombia to meet with his counterparts in the Colombian Defense and Navy. Mabus highlighted the trip in his remarks about recent cooperation efforts between the Colombian Navy and U.S. Navy to include RIMPAC, Dawn Blitz, and UNITAS in 2014.[178] Secretary Mabus spoke to Colombian military and U.S. military personnel during his visit, and stated, "we value the robust and unique relationship we enjoy with Colombia. Strong military cooperation is a critical element of our dynamic partnership and we look forward to strengthening this relationship in the future."[179] Having senior U.S. and Colombian civilian officials discussing cooperation efforts between the militaries gives military leaders the support they need to continue cooperating and building relationships between each other.

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[174] Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Lumpkin to Congressman Henry Johnson, April 1, 2015.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Lumpkin to Congressman Henry Johnson, April 1, 2015.

[177] "15-nation Unitas Naval Exercise Kicks off in Colombian Waters," *RTT News*, September 10, 2013, http://www.rttnews.com/.

[178] "SECNAV Focuses on Enhancing DoN Partnerships with Colombia," *Navy News Service*, February 4, 2015, http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=85453.

[179] Ibid.

Plan Colombia changed slightly after 9/11 to make sure the U.S. and Colombia took the fight to terrorists, too, and not just to drug lords and TOCs. More established formal and informal institutions appeared during this period to combat terrorism and support other regional issues. Liberalism best explains cooperation between the Colombian and U.S. militaries. U.S. military advisors still train their Colombian counterparts in all aspects of the military from leadership to weapons training. This training occurs in the United States and in Colombia with many U.S. military personnel stationed permanently in Colombia. The two countries realize they must work together to combat the drug trade, fight internal instability within Colombia caused by organizations like the FARC, and establish formal institutions to ensure one is not taken advantage of, like a restriction in the amount of U.S. military personnel in Colombia at any one time. Informal institutions are likely set up to deal with the corruption that still may be apparent within certain Colombian military units, but reporting on this is not widespread.

F. ANALYSIS

Analyzing each international relations theory occurred based on the independent variables of external security and internal instability. As indicated in Table 3, realism best explains international relations between the two countries from the 1900s to the present day. Table 4 will show whether cooperation occurred and the reasons why or what limited cooperation efforts, between the U.S. and Colombian militaries. While liberalism can explain recent cooperation efforts between the two countries, and constructivism could explain the start of cooperation, realism appears to be the driving force for military cooperation between the two countries. Earlier relationships between the United States and Colombia occurred because of a common external security threat and a common interest in economic prosperity in the region. Cooperation efforts continued over the past three decades because of the internal instability within Colombia posed by drug traffickers and other terrorist organizations.

Table 3. Analyzing how each Hypothesis Applies to Relations between the United States and Colombia[180]

	Realism	**Liberalism**	**Constructivism**
Prior to WWII	Yes	No	Yes
WWII to War on Drugs	Yes	Yes	No
War on Drugs to 9/11	Yes	Yes	No
9/11 to Present	Yes	Yes	No
Total:	4	3	1

Table 4. Reasons for U.S. Military and Colombian Military Cooperation[181]

	Cooperation	**Reason**
Prior to WWII	Med	Cooperation did not exist when Panama broke from Colombia. U.S. supported Panamanian government. Cooperation took form when Colombians realized the United States could enhance Colombian military strength.
WWII to War on Drugs	High	Cooperation occurred due to an external security threat from Axis powers during WWII. Further cooperation occurred on the international stage when Colombia signed an agreement with the UN.
War on Drugs to 9/11	Med	Internal instability in Colombia from organizations like the FARC and ELN, and external security issues from TOCs fosters cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian militaries. Mil-to-Mil cooperation dropped off for a period because civilian law enforcement led anti-drug operations.
9/11 to the Present	High	Internal instability in Colombia from the FARC and ELN, and external security issues from TOCs continue to foster military cooperation between the two countries. Established formal institutions, like Plan Colombia, solidified cooperation with training and equipment.

[180] Table 3 is adapted from Dean A. Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm and the Shaping of U.S. Military Engagement in Colombia, 1997–2000," in *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Derek S. Reveron (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Bradley Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939–1960* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008).

[181] Table 4 is adapted from Dean A. Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm and the Shaping of U.S. Military Engagement in Colombia, 1997–2000," in *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Derek S. Reveron (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Bradley Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939–1960* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008).

G. CONCLUSION

Cooperation between the U.S. military and Colombian military has grown at a steady pace since the two governments agreed to defend the Panama Canal during World War II. Few obstacles prevent cooperation, such as those obstacles visible during the 1980s and early 1990s when corruption became apparent within Colombian military ranks and human rights abuses began to appear. Drug trafficking activity in the Caribbean is a regional problem that begs for the U.S. and Colombian militaries to cooperate. Drugs coming from Colombia and surrounding countries pose an external security risk in the United States and an internal security risk to Colombia, leading the two countries to cooperate. Colombia will need to make domestic headway in the war on drugs and ensure its own forces stay true to the Colombian government, not to the drug lords, by providing internal stability to the country. Likewise, the United States will need to continue to train and equip the Colombian military in Colombia to show its commitment and resolve to the drug trafficking problem. Plan Colombia provides a good formal institution to release funds to Colombia and outline how the United States plans to assist their Colombian counterparts, especially since Colombia could use those funds to fight internal instability created by the FARC. Military cooperation against drug trafficking in Colombia will need to take place at the source to prevent exportation. Once drugs find their way into the United States, it is already too late. The two countries should look to their past to see that they have common interests in the success of the Western Hemisphere, and that success came from key individuals, resolute documents, and rules.

IV. CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

Why do two countries cooperate militarily with each other? What explains the variation in cooperation between the U.S. military and forces in Colombia and Mexico? Military leaders should want to know why we cooperate with certain nations and they should be concerned with how we achieve that cooperation. Culture, government, history, ideology, location, funding, reasoning, and policy are just a few of the unique variables that make countries different. Using IR theory to understand why two countries cooperate is just as important as knowing certain aspects of a country itself. For example, one could extract reasons that either helped or hurt cooperation efforts by looking at historical cooperation events. The evidence gathered from this research could apply to real-world cooperation efforts, would likely foster better relations, and create a better understanding of how to achieve common goals cooperating militarily. This thesis applied three generic IR hypotheses—liberalism, constructivism, and realism—to assess, analyze, and understand the variation in the United States' cooperation with other countries, using a structured, focused, and similar comparison of two countries, Mexico and Colombia, and their relationship with the United States over time. Other case studies, comparing the U.S./Canadian militaries or the U.S./Japanese militaries, could be used, but Colombia and Mexico are unique as subjects of study because they are located in the same hemisphere and are nearly identical.

This thesis found that there is a correlation with the IR theory of realism and reasons for military cooperation, as depicted in Table 5 and Table 6. Cooperation exists when countries share external security concerns, when mutual benefits exist because of economic ties, or when the internal instability of one country creates a reliance on another country. Cooperation remains low when there is no common external security threat, when two states perceive each other as a threat, or a country can control internal stability on its own. In Chapter II, this thesis found two specific reasons, based on realism, why the U.S. and Mexican militaries hesitate when tasked to work together militarily. First, U.S. military intervention in Mexico during the 1800s and the subsequent military conflicts between the two countries hindered cooperation efforts for decades. It

is very difficult to cooperate when you are at war. Second, the Mexican constitution of 1917 specifically bans a garrison of foreign military units in Mexico. Mexico attributes this reasoning to its stance of wanting to tread lightly when it appears that its sovereignty may be violated upon because the world, in their eyes, is in anarchy and Mexico must look out for its own interests. In Chapter III, this thesis found two specific reasons why the U.S. and Colombian militaries continue to cooperate militarily. These reasons solidify the international relations theory of realism. First, prior to and during World War II, cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian militaries occurred to defend the economic interests of their respective civilian governments by protecting the Panama Canal from the Axis powers. Second, the Colombian military frequently allows U.S. military personnel into its country to assist, train, and equip Colombian forces in an effort to quell internal instability. Nearly every cooperative event starts with the two countries having a common external or internal security interest, respective individuals forming relationships or informal institutions, and solidifying that cooperation effort by establishing formal agreements and institutions.

This chapter will analyze the reasons that best explain variation in cooperation in the U.S. military and Colombian military case study and U.S. military and Mexican military case study as it relates to the identified IR theories explained in Chapter I, and support those findings with historical events that either shaped or hindered military cooperation efforts. This chapter will identify a few takeaways that all three countries could use to promote and foster future cooperation against drug trafficking within their respective military departments, and end by recommending further research.

Table 5. Analysis of U.S. Military and Mexican Military Cooperation[182]

	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism	Cooperation	Reason
Prior to WWII	Yes	No	No	None	No cooperation existed. Both countries were external security threats to each other.
WWII to War on Drugs	Yes	No	No	Low	Limited cooperation existed. Both countries cooperated internationally against a common enemy, the Axis powers, but sovereignty issues along the Mexican border limited cooperation.
War on Drugs to 9/11	Yes	Yes	Yes	High	Cooperation existed because both countries saw a need to combat drug trafficking. Formal institutions were established to facilitate cooperation efforts, and civilian leadership in Mexico became more conservative and aligned with U.S. thought.
9/11 to Present	Yes	Yes	No	High	Cooperation exists today to combat drug trafficking, internal instability within Mexico, and regional security in the Western Hemisphere. Institutions are developed, like the Mérida Initiative, to continue to facilitate cooperation.
Total:	4	2	1		

[182] Table 5 is adapted from Graham H. Turbiville Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico: Uneasy Past and Challenging Future." *Joint Special Operations University Report 10–2*. Hurlburt Field, FL: The JSOU Press, 2010. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA516048; Richard D. Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico: The Future of U.S./Mexican Defense Relations." *Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 5–35. http://chds.dodlive.mil/files/2013/12/pub-OP-downie1.pdf; Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface." *Strategic Forum*, no. 243 (2009): 1–12. http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA504170.

Table 6. Analysis of U.S. Military and Colombian Military Cooperation[183]

	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism	Cooperation	Reason
Prior to WWII	Yes	No	Yes	Med	Cooperation did not exist when Panama broke from Colombia. U.S. supported Panamanian government. Cooperation took form when Colombians realized the United States could enhance Colombian military strength.
WWII to War on Drugs	Yes	Yes	No	High	Cooperation occurred due to an external security threat from Axis powers during WWII. Further cooperation occurred on the international stage when Colombia signed an agreement with the UN.
War on Drugs to 9/11	Yes	Yes	No	Med	Internal instability in Colombia from organizations like the FARC and ELN, and external security issues from TOCs fosters cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian military. Mil-to-Mil cooperation dropped off for a period because civilian law enforcement led anti-drug operations.
9/11 to Present	Yes	Yes	No	High	Internal instability in Colombia from the FARC and ELN, and external security issues from TOCs continue to foster military cooperation between both countries. Formal institutions, like Plan Colombia, are established to solidify cooperation with training and equipment.
Total:	4	3	1		

A. ANALYZING THE TWO CASE STUDIES

1. U.S. and Mexican Militaries

Mexico wants the best possible security outcome for itself as it relates to domestic or international security. Cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican militaries will still occur when realism is applied because the two organizations think reasonably and may share certain interests like combatting drug trafficking. However, that cooperation is likely limited to shared security goals between the two countries as Mexico continues to survive as a sovereign state under anarchy. Today, U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation continues to improve, in some ways mirroring U.S. military and Colombian

[183] Table 6 is adapted from Dean A. Cook, "U.S. Southern Command: General Charles E. Wilhelm and the Shaping of U.S. Military Engagement in Colombia, 1997–2000," in *America's Viceroys: The Military and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Derek S. Reveron (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Bradley Coleman, *Colombia and the United States: The Making of an Inter-American Alliance, 1939–1960* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008).

military cooperation because of recent agreements signed between the two countries and common external threats from the drug trade. For example, the Mérida Initiative, just like Plan Colombia, is a formal document between the U.S. and Mexico to provide funding, equipment, and military advisors to help stop drug violence in Mexico and near the Mexico-U.S. border. However, U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation will never be ideal because of historical events and formal institutions preventing complete cooperation. The Mexican people will continue to remember the U.S. military as invaders and push back at any perceived state sovereignty violations. In Chapter II, this thesis pointed out that the United States declared war on Mexico in 1846 after the United States forcefully acquired thousands of square miles of Mexican territory. This war declaration was far different from the United States declaring war against the Japanese during World War II. The United States did not intend to annex Japanese lands, but rather to push the Japanese back to their sovereign territory. In Mexico's case, the United States used its military to push the U.S. border deeper into the heart of Mexico. Chapter II looks more closely into the actual events and battles that ensued. This encroachment on the Mexican people and the images of U.S. military forces moving from Mexican town to town continues to play out in Mexican storytelling today.

Mexico guards its sovereignty with pride. There are very few instances in Mexican history that the Mexican government granted foreign military forces to reside in its country, most notably during WWII. U.S. military service members in Mexico serve as liaison officers at the U.S. Embassy. As pointed out in Chapter II, Mexico gave U.S. military units permission to fly in Mexican airspace and use Mexican port and airport facilities during World War II. However, Mexico passed a constitution in 1917 that prohibits a garrison of foreign military units within its sovereign borders. The reason for this is simple: Mexico did not want a perceived "occupying force" in its country in the 1900s, and today, would rather receive military training and assistance, if it so desires, in the country offering such assistance. This precaution likely stems from the war with the United States and future cooperation will need to reflect on this document and tread lightly with their Mexican counterparts.

2. U.S. and Colombian Militaries

The United States and Colombia have shared common security interests in the region. Proponents of realism argue that all states live under anarchy, and these two states share common economic interests and external security threats. Proponents of liberalism look past those competing states and theorize that the two states can establish institutions, change behaviors, and adjust policies to achieve common goals under anarchy. States can rely on individuals to put forth shared preferences and coordinate common interests. The U.S. and Colombian militaries have cooperated since the early 1900s when a common economic goal of protecting the Panama Canal was in the best interest of the two governments. The two countries did not share a common border that would have caused sovereignty issues. Neither country tried to invade the other country to amass more land. The two countries survived in anarchy and found ways to cooperate. As pointed out in Chapter III, the United States established a Caribbean Defense Command to prevent the Axis powers from sabotaging the Panama Canal because the Colombian and U.S. governments viewed the canal as a military and commercial strategic asset in the Western Hemisphere. This relationship first started out by military individual recognizing a need to protect such a vital asset in the region, a common external security threat from Axis powers, and eventually created an actual common formal institution, Caribbean Defense Command, that theoretically crossed the borders of the two states. U.S. military personnel and Colombian liaisons created the name for this command.

Chapter III of this thesis gives example after example of U.S. military and Colombian military cooperation throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Most of this cooperation stems from U.S. military advisors training Colombian forces combating the drug trade. One key aspect of this training that differentiates itself from Mexico is that it occurs in the United States and in Colombia. Colombia allows the United States to station its military personnel in Colombia. There is a limit and Chapter III outlines those requirements set by Colombian law, but having foreign military forces, like the U.S. military, with you when you carry out missions against domestic criminals creates familiarity, cohesion, and trust between those units, and ensures a greater operational success rate. U.S. military officials were instrumental in establishing cooperation efforts

in Colombia. Chapter III discussed key individuals that used informal institutions, like military norms and social relationships, to promote cooperation. This eventually led to establishing formal institutions, like Plan Colombia, military schools in Colombia that mirror United States curricula, and other security cooperation agreements. Colombia and the United States share a common desire to reduce drug violence in Colombia, and stop the drug trade using the Caribbean sea-lanes of communication into the United States. the Two countries create policies to benefit the other, and Colombia trusts that the United States will not invade or occupy its country.

B. CONTINUED U.S. COOPERATION WITH COLOMBIA

The U.S. and Colombian militaries can achieve future cooperation by looking through the three IR theories identified earlier in this chapter. Proponents of realism view themselves living in anarchy where no one entity controls the will of all. Cooperation with other states only happens if it benefits a state's own national security. Colombia will likely remain partners and cooperate with the United States so long as money from Plan Colombia, and training from U.S. military forces, continues. If Colombia views the United States as a competitor under anarchy, it will be more worried about its domestic issues, most notably arising from violent criminal organizations like the ELN and FARC, or TOCs. The United States is likely more worried about the movement of drugs from Colombia to the U.S. border.

Proponents of constructivism would argue that a state cooperates with another state when good social relationships exist, both historical and current. U.S. military and Colombian military leaders continue to lead cooperation efforts by, first, establishing relationships. Events outlined in Chapter III continuously point out leader after leader expressing a need and desire to cooperate with the other country. Sometimes the civilian leader of that respective defense department initiates that relationship. Other times, the president of that nation calls on his counterpart to establish a good social relationship. Even when cooperation cooled, like during the drug corruption years, individuals kept the back channels open to discuss future planned cooperation efforts. Leaders today, like the current SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM Commanders, likely continue this tradition of

establishing good social relationships in Colombia to further U.S. foreign policy and national objectives through military cooperation.

Liberal theory puts formal institutions and individual behaviors to better the two state's outcome at the forefront of its argument. This thesis argues that liberal theory describes the main reason why the Colombian military and U.S. military cooperate. The U.S. government should continue to fund Plan Colombia and put pressure on other Latin American countries to assist Colombia in tackling the drug trafficking problem in the Western Hemisphere. More Colombian military personnel should train at U.S. service schools, and learn skills beyond weapons handling and combat maneuvers. The United States should outline these cooperation efforts in agreements and other formal institutions, and the two countries should work with their military representatives to reduce drug trafficking in and out of Colombia.

C. ADJUSTING U.S. COOPERATION WITH MEXICO

It can be concluded from the three IR theories identified earlier in this chapter that the achievement of future cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican militaries is likely. Realists would argue that states look after their own security in an anarchic world. They choose to cooperate with other states only if it enhances their own national security. Craig Deare states, "Mexico has five significant obstacles to overcome" if successful military cooperation is going to exist between the two countries in the future.[184] The struggles likely stems from "the continued existence of two service secretaries rather than a unified defense ministry, inadequate budgeting for the military realities of the country, lack of properly trained civilian leaders to exercise effective policy control over the two secretariats, widespread mistrust of the armed forces by other federal agencies, and domestic political realities."[185] All of these reasons likely arise from Mexico deciding on what is right for its own national defense and security. The United States seeks cooperation with Mexico because it is trying to push security past its own borders to

[184] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations," 5.

[185] Ibid.

create a buffer zone. The U.S. military will need to work with the Mexican military on its terms, instead of trying to mold it into something that it is not.

Constructivists would argue that a state would likely cooperate with another state when good social relationships, both historical and current, have been established between the two. Graham H. Turbiville, Jr. argues that the U.S. military, moving forward to cooperate with Mexico, will need to recognize that "greater recognition of the Mexican military's historical and current institutional sensitivities and national government internal restraints have led to approaches that are phased, measured, and in more accord with Mexico's preferred go-slow stipulations than many in the past."[186] While the current relationship between the U.S. and Mexican militaries grows, the historical relationship continues to hinder full cooperation.

Proponents of liberalism would argue that state cooperation balances on strong relationships between formal and informal institutions between two countries. Richard Downie argues that a future success in U.S. military and Mexican military cooperation would likely need to mirror the bilateral defense relationship of the United States and Canada, because it "involves a rich tradition of agreements and joint commissions, including a bi-national command, such as the U.S./Canada Permanent Joint Board on Defense, established in 1948; the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC), since 1945; and the North America Aerospace Defense Command, based in Colorado Springs, CO, which is literally a two-nation command."[187] Strong formal relationships between the United States and Canada have maintained steady cooperation for years. For the U.S. and Mexican militaries to form such strong cooperative efforts, the two countries may need to rely on informal institutions until formal institutions built at the civilian level trickle down to effect cooperation at the military level.

[186] Turbiville, Jr., "U.S. Military Engagement with Mexico," 45.

[187] Downie, "Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico," 20.

D. FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis looked broadly at the variation in military cooperation between the U.S. and Colombian militaries and U.S. and Mexican militaries. Further research could investigate relationships between U.S. Navy personnel and the Armada de Mexico, relationships between U.S. Army leaders and the National Army of Colombia, and individual relationships between corrupt Colombian military and Mexican military officers, and drug cartels, in their respective countries. Research on the number of Colombian military and Mexican military graduates of U.S. military schools since the middle 1900s, and reviewing data on graduation rates, etc., would also enhance understanding of this topic. Interviewing current and former Colombian military and Mexican military personnel who interacted with U.S. military personnel during their time in service would dramatically add to the primary sources of this thesis, give the reader a more personal touch to the topic, and may change the outcome of the correlated IR theories. Finally, further research linking political leaders from the two countries, their policies and ideology, and the actions of their respective military carrying out those policies would be beneficial.

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